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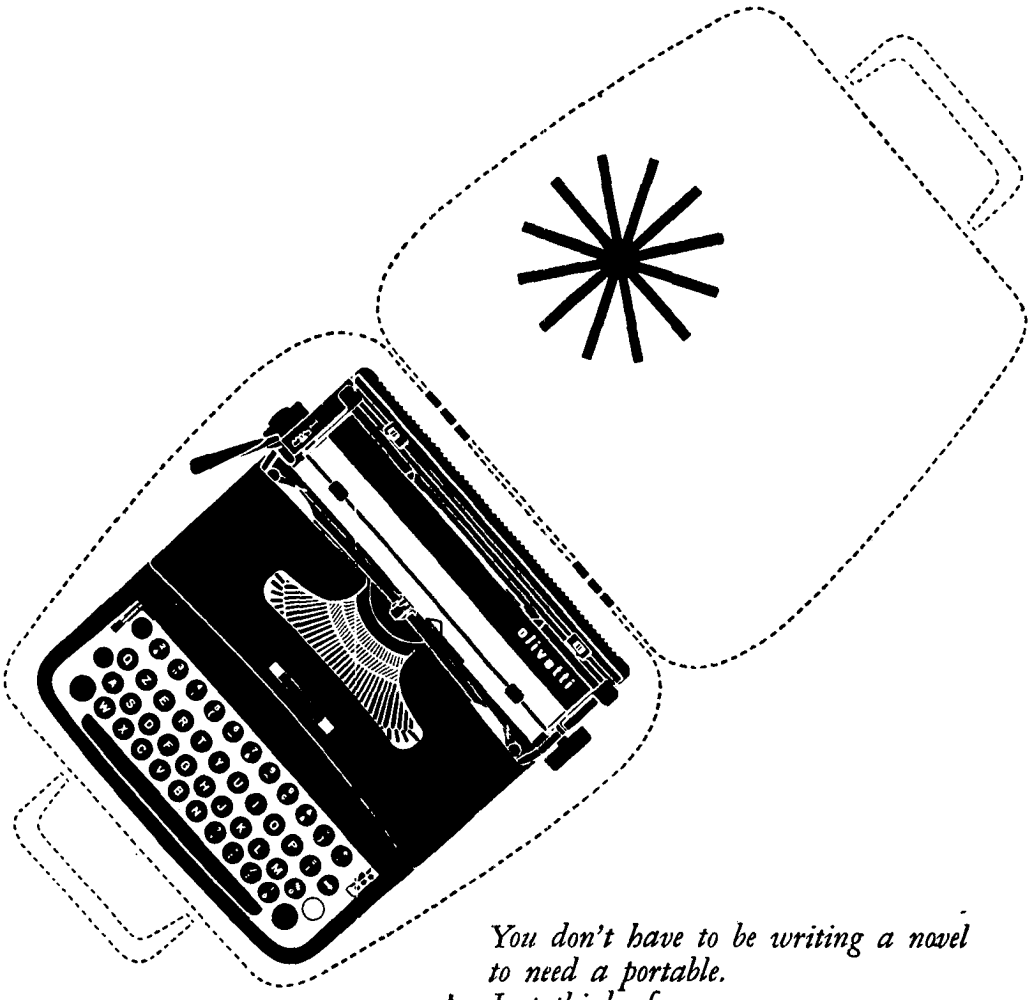

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Nadine Gordimer

A Thing of the Past

THE house in Maadi was as quiet as it had been in the days when they were all out of it, going about their business and their pleasure; yet they were all there. Madame Achilet played patience behind the bougainvillea on the verandah and did not lift her eyes if someone walked past. Irene was writing in the big studio on the roof. Her husband Max was in the darkened library. Even when the children were home from school the great empty garden took their voices like depthless green waters swallowing a handful of coins.

Who was dead? No one—the old man, Achilet Pasha, whose wealth had made the wonderful garden, had died years ago. But the house was dead; the sort of life that had fed it was gone. Irene's husband Max, who had nothing to do all day, sometimes had the fantasy that he was the last white man left in Africa. He sat among the dim shapes behind the shutters and felt himself alone, not only in Egypt, but in the whole continent.

It was not true, of course, that the Achilet family were alone even in Cairo. There were a few others who had missed the exodus of the foreign community that had begun when the King was banished and reached its peak after the Suez canal was nationalised; but these others were merely stragglers, and they were leaving one by one, month by month. The Alexandria Achilets had gone, and Irene's brothers and their families; the aunts had gone, and the old Pasha's brother. Of all the big and powerful family, with its French, Greek, and Jewish antecedents, only Irene and her small family remained. "I'm a hostage," Irene would explain to infrequent visitors, with her pealing, fidgety laugh that ended or interrupted everything she said. She was a soft woman of thirty-eight, with the special liveliness of an inherited emotional temperament that had been nurtured in an atmosphere of indulgence and privilege. Like many people who have had it too good, she had courage. It took the form, in her, of the show of a refusal to change. She pulled a face at each fresh notice of sequestration; she shrugged her shoulders and laughed over her own efforts to help her children do their homework in the new medium of instruction, Arabic, that they had had to accustom themselves to since the French school was closed; she wore about the silent house the gay pants and clinging shirts that, other years, she had worn on the Riviera. She was no longer young, and the lines of her pretty, sallow face, with the big black, amusing eyes, had softened and sagged, like the small, voluptuous lines of her body. "Irene feels she can't go while she can do something for the others by hanging on," her husband would explain. Irene hadn't lost *all* her property; there was the house in Maadi among other things. She still had some influence, and some connections, too, and as long as she stayed in Egypt she had the chance of getting a trickle of compensation out to her brothers and those other members of the family who had been completely dispossessed. The moment she packed up and left, of course, she would have to leave everything behind her.

It often seemed to Max, her husband (alone

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in the shuttered library), that, apart from the money, there would be nothing left to leave behind, soon. The old lady, Madame Achilet, had built herself a house of cards to shelter a shadow; the spirit of the children was camping out, without a home—and he, himself, and Irene? It was difficult to judge, with Irene. She was the third generation of her family to be born in Egypt. Even though she did not belong to Egypt—was part of that expendable, exotic life of the cities—she seemed to have been conditioned, by the lives of the people, of whom she had never been in the least aware, to something of their acceptance of the passing of kings and palaces and the successive waves of conquering hordes. There could be no other explanation for her wry and yet almost cheerful, unnoticing submission to the silent house. She was writing a play, she said; she had always been writing a play, she had taken it up and put it down like a piece of embroidery, between entertaining, spending the summer in Europe and the winter in Switzerland or Luxor. It was hard to imagine that the play would ever be finished, or could hope to fill the long days. For himself, her husband was an architect, and as a foreigner, no longer allowed to practise his profession. He went on working at home, for a time; he drew plans for all those buildings that no client had ever wanted. And then this sense of freedom went out, no star but a child's rocket. He went to play golf every morning with someone else who was hanging on; a woman as idle as he was, who tried to attract him into the pastime of an affair. Then he began to follow the routine that looked as if it would last. Every morning after breakfast he walked once or twice round Achilet Pasha's tropical garden, and then he shut himself in the library and pulled the shutters against the heat. Rolls of plans glowed redly, like tunnels in the dimness; they grew brittle as time went by, and the edges were ragged where the servant's duster brushed them. His own hands sometimes touched against them, too. He sat at the desk and smoked. Sometimes he read a little from the middle of any book taken out of the shelf behind him. He dozed. Idleness was a dungeon into which he had been flung.

"Perhaps we'll hang on long enough for things to be all right again, and everyone will be able to come back," said Irene gaily, with one of her eloquent shrugs, "Who knows?"

Her husband looked as if he hadn't heard, but behind his quiet, bored face he was experiencing a moment of passionate horror. They had floated like oil on the thin, poor life of the country—Irene, himself, all of them. Lately he had begun to struggle with a guilt like nausea, at the surfeit of the life that he had lived. He turned away his head and swallowed, as if someone had thrust a piece of corpse-meat at his mouth.

Irene came over and picked up his hand. She laughed and her breasts lolled apart under her cotton sweater. "Come on, now," she said cheerfully, "things just as unlikely have happened here before now, darling. It's not at all impossible, eh?"

MAX LEONARD was a South African and it was through the war that he had come to marry Irene Achilet. It sounded a pretty brazen sort of story, but it was a common one in all countries that the war touched, and at the time it had happened very simply, without much thinking and perhaps without any real volition on anyone's part. Irene had been married before, very young, to a young Frenchman. He was an archæologist, and when he arrived in Egypt he had come to Achilet Pasha's house on an introduction from someone in Paris. Irene was eighteen, just back from school in France herself, and in that state of innocent excitability that is often the first and sometimes the strongest state of sexual attractiveness in a girl. She and Jules Sidon walked straight into a trance of delight in each other; he could not possibly have been expected to resist her and the trap she did not even know she had set was waiting to take him. It was impossible for them not to finger each other (she had to pinch the lobe of his clean ear, he had to feel out the bend of her elbow) in a kind of birds' dance of courtship, and old Achilet saw that it was hopeless to oppose

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the youthful marriage. They were married and Irene trailed off into the desert behind Sidon to love him at night in his tent. He had thought the world consisted of digging and studying what was dug up, before he was confronted with Irene, and now thought that it consisted of digging, studying, and Irene. All day she wandered about the digging site in a pair of Sidon's old khaki trousers, with her hair tied up in a rag of a scarf and her face oiled against the winter sun. She did not worry Sidon but sometimes he explained some shard or carved fragment to her as if he were training some new male assistant sent out from the Institute in Paris. In summer they lived in the house in Maadi that Irene's father had built for them, and often Sidon would put aside his cataloguing and writing and drive out with her to sleep the night in the desert. Sidon knew no human beings other than the ancient Egyptians and Irene Achilet; and then the war came, and all the others crowded in.

Sidon was called back to France and he went into the army. Irene stayed at home in Cairo. She went to meet him once, in Beirut, when they managed to spend two weeks together. And then for nearly three years, while France fell, while he fought now in this country, now in that, they did not see each other. The house in Maadi was lent to the British Army as a convalescent home, and Irene moved into a flat overlooking the Nile. She wrote letters to Sidon, she drew up a reading plan for herself, to study archæology, and she took her part in the elaborate social life of the foreign community to which she belonged, and which had received fresh impetus in the entertainment of the men the war had brought to Egypt. She was very young still, and soon Sidon had been away for a longer time than she had lived with him. She was terrified that he would die, but then the years went by and he didn't die, and her terror subsided. There were thousands of people living as she lived; it seemed to be the natural order of things that men should dine and talk and drink not with their own women, but with the women of other men, who, in their turn, were in the company of yet other women, on another side of the world.

She met the South African captain, Max Leonard, in the house of her uncle in Alexandria, and later, when he was in Cairo on leave, he came to see her. She invited him to dinner with other friends, they went out dancing together. The next time he came to Cairo on leave, it was suddenly quite different; he called, and sat stiffly on the terrace, and she did not know what to say. The old tension—the silent whirlpool drawing them to its centre—that had existed so uniquely, so extraordinarily between Sidon and her: she felt it again, quite simply, with this man who wasn't Sidon. He wasn't at all like Sidon, she didn't feel any of the other things that she had felt about Sidon, the things that very young girls feel—but she felt this. She went away with Max Leonard for a week-end, somewhere unlikely—Port Said, of all places —and she felt contented, gay, and lazy. There were many other affairs like it at the time; they were interludes of peace and happiness in the displacement of feelings that distresses people in war. They were sexual and innocent; and sometimes the partners became friends, as well. Whenever he could get away from the desert, Max lived at the flat with her. Sometimes Max indulged in fantasies about a future life with her, but they were not painful. "If I could take you to South Africa with me, I'd show you some things that'd have you gasping," he said, with affectionate reference to her quick enthusiasms, "I take you up the Drakensberg with the pack ponies right over into Basutoland. I'd take you to the Congo. I'd drive you all round the Cape Peninsula, we'd get a cottage in a fishing village——" She laughed and wrinkled her nose. "I'd rather take you skiing in Switzerland. Right up to one of the small villages. I bet you'd learn quickly. I'd rather have the snow."

When Irene's husband Sidon came back at last, Max was in the Western Desert, not a day's drive from Cairo. Irene and her family met Sidon and went back to the old Achilets' house for a celebration lunch. After lunch

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Irene and Sidon went into the garden to stroll and talk; it was the first time that they were alone together. Sidon, with his curly fair hair and his glasses that seemed to concentrate his gaze on her, as if she were some beautiful limestone head suddenly freed from the sand of the past, said to her, "Irene, I couldn't write and tell you. For the last eight months I've been having an affair with a woman in England. I must tell you now."

"Oh Jules," she said, "I know! I know!"

"Irene, what's the matter?" Sidon was stiff and pale.

"I've been having—I had something like that myself. I couldn't write, either."

Sidon was silent. He looked up quickly, aware, at the palm trees, as a man does when he has taken an unfamiliar turning and lost himself.

"I can't explain it. I longed for you, Irene."

"I know," she said.

"Was he in Cairo?" said Sidon.

"He's a South African, in the Western Desert. Not far," said Irene.

When he did not speak she said, "He's there now."

He still did not speak.

She leaned towards him, urgently, and smiled. "Jules, don't let's take it as a tragedy. We're grown up now. It couldn't be helped, could it? We were such infants when we married. Jules, please; please, Jules, don't be sad; just smile at me, just once. . . ."

He managed it, though perhaps it broke his heart; really broke that young heart from which the moment of freedom—essential to attain—is so painful. From that moment on he began to live like a grown man, with the conditional instead of the absolute.

They talked for a few minutes, like old friends in mourning. They were calm, almost confident. Then Jules said, "About the flat——" "I'll give up the flat," said Irene. "We'll get another one, and perhaps we'll get the house in Maadi back, soon."

"Perhaps I shouldn't move into the flat," he said, "for a few days, until you move out of it—don't you think?"

She felt forlorn. "You don't have to see the flat, if you'd rather not," she said, shyly.

Suddenly they felt sure there would be no divorce; they would begin together again, start right at the beginning with a new courtship, even.

"Oh no, it's not as bad as that," he smiled. "I don't mind seeing it."

UNFORTUNATELY he came one morning when Max was there. Sidon was staying in the flat of a trusted friend (neither Irene nor Sidon wanted the Achilets to know that he was not sharing the flat with her) and he popped in about eight in the morning to pick up some of his old civilian clothes. The South African, in pyjamas, came to open the front door.

The three of them sat on the terrace, drank coffee, and talked sensibly. Below, the smooth Nile bellied a little with the first of the flood water, like a great sail. Then Max left and Irene and Sidon talked some more. Irene told Sidon the truth, which was that she had sent for Max to explain her feelings to him, and he had slept the night, quite decorously, in the living-room. Sidon knew that Irene could not lie to him, and he nodded his acceptance. Suddenly he said to her in French, which the South African could not speak—"But Irene, do you love him?" He watched for her answer kindly, keenly, short-sightedly, as he used to watch to see if she had grasped some deceptively simple archæological point.

"I loved you," she answered in French, in the tone of something she was sure of, "I thought that was all."

And then he said, speaking English again, "Yes, as you said, it was all so different then. We were children." They agreed that Irene was confused and that they would not rush into a divorce.

But they were drifting to one already—unaware, really; helpless, it seemed—and in due time it happened. After the divorce Irene lived with Max until 1945, when he went home to South Africa to be demobilised, and then he returned to Cairo and they were married. It was a very good marriage; Irene was perhaps happier in it than Max, probably because she was by nature of a happier temperament than his—he found life suspect,

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though he had not yet found it out, and was watchful of it. There was a lot of building going on after the war, and the good connections of the Achilet family brought him scope and success as an architect. Their three children were born to them in the house in Maadi that Achilet Pasha had built for Irene, and they lived the rich and comfortable cosmopolitan life that Irene had been born to. Max was able to go to Brazil, Europe, and America to keep in touch with the work of his great contemporaries, and his natural inclinations, given international opportunity, led him to become a man of culture outside the special interests of his work. He went back to South Africa only once, in the early fifties. His brother said to him, "You're not like us at all, any more"; but he himself felt he did not know *them*, for they were preoccupied with a problem that he, with his coin collection, his Turkish glass collection, and his passion for early Japanese woodcuts, did not think of outside the daily glance at newspaper columns—they were conscious of the fact that they were white men, few, guilty, and unloved, in a continent of black. The small, warm, fusty context of home to which he had returned was discovered to be an exposed place. It did not trouble him much at the time; he simply did not go back to South Africa again; there was the whole of Europe, after all.

As FREQUENTLY happens in a sophisticated community, Irene's first brief marriage had become so much—to use her own slangy phrase—"ancient history" that the former partners quite often met in the ordinary course of social life, entirely without embarrassment. Also, as frequently happens when a romantic marriage has dissolved, the two who it had seemed would do only for each other had quickly found others who would do just as well. Sidon had not left Egypt; he had stayed on and married a nice girl, some connection of the Italian ambassador; they had two children who attended the same school as the Achilet-Leonard children—that was, until the French School closed down. Max and Irene would exchange any tid-bit about Sidon quite unselfconsciously along with the other gossip of the town; when Sidon wrote an archæological treatise that won him some French academic honour, Irene telephoned Lila Sidon to give the Sidons Max's and her congratulations. Irene always referred to her ex-husband by his surname, as if he were some public personality whom she had once met; she remarked to Max, "Who would have thought it?—they say he'll get a decoration from France one of these days. My poor father, how cross he'd be if he knew"—she laughed and pulled a droll face—"he was quite sure Sidon would come to nothing." Two years after Suez, the Sidons were among the few who were still in Egypt; like the Achilets in the house in Maadi, they too, were hanging on, it was said because Sidon had just begun an important piece of excavation when the ban on foreign archæological expeditions was enforced, and he was determined to wait for it to be lifted. Irene and Sidon's wife quite often bumped into each other at Groppi's garden, and one would pause at the other's table to talk for a few minutes about a concert, the children's progress at school, or other commonplaces.

Two years after Suez, Irene looked at her husband anxiously when he came out of the darkened library at the sound of the lunch-bell every day. "What sort of a morning did you have?"

His face was stiff with loneliness, hours without the sound or sight of anything but his own thoughts. He cleared his throat and smiled. "All right." A moment later he remembered, and said, "And you?" She was off at once, with relief, in chatter, pouring herself a glass of sherry, stretching her short legs, yawning cheerfully; she had written four letters, she had telephoned so-and-so, she had read this or that.

One day she said to him, "How are you getting on with the plans for the villa? Can't I see them yet?"

He drew breath guiltily, let it go again.

Animation and interest, self-forgetfulness dropped from her pretty face; she waited for

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him to contradict her understanding of the truth, to hide it from her.

"I haven't got far enough yet."

"But three—six months. More." She waited, without hope.

"We won't ever get to Italy," he said gently.

She sat bolt upright. She was suddenly excited, in her way. "Why do you say that? Don't you *want* to go? Don't you want us to have a house out of this place, in a country we've loved all our lives? Good God, you've always said that the one place you want to build yourself a house is on the hills above Nemi.... Why do you say that?"

"We're still here," he said.

"Why do you say that?" she insisted, ignoring him, her eyes challenging with fear. "Why do you say we won't get there? Don't you *want* to get out of this?"

He did not know how to answer her, for he knew he could not tell her that it was not just *this*—the life in which they were without privilege and were allowed to exist only under sufferance—that he wanted to escape; he feared the possibility, however remote, of a return to the life they had lost. The year when he had gone home to South Africa, his brother had said, "You are not one of us at all, any more"; he had come, at last, to understand what those men themselves felt, few, guilty, and unloved, in the black men's continent, belonging not there nor yet anywhere.

Directly after lunch she raced upstairs to her studio like a schoolgirl. She did not appear until it was growing dark. "I've been going through everything again," she said, "all the papers. I'll go and see Delbanco again to-morrow. If we could only get some sort of security for my brother's property, and wangle to get Mama's account released, I'd let the rest go."

She was a capable girl, all right, and a good trier. But it was no good. The money could not be got out; the property was in jeopardy. They stayed where they were, and Max actually did draw up the plans for the Italian villa, to comfort her.

And then one afternoon he was sitting reading in a cool, gloomy arbour of the old pasha's garden when he saw her flash down one of the paths separated from him by shrubs and the sword-leaves of some rare lily plants. It always touched him to see her run, as if she were still a young girl, unaware of her thickened, slackened, woman's body. He thought that she was probably looking for one of the children and he went on reading, but in a moment he heard her calling his name—"Max! Ma-ax?"—and he stood up and called back, "Here! By the pond." She had been out for lunch, quite an event for those days, and he had not seen her all day. "Nobody in the house knew where you were," she said, sitting down with her hands closely linked between her knees; she had changed out of her town clothes into her usual trousers and espadrilles. "I couldn't have got very far," he said, with a smile. "How was the day?" She did not answer and gave him one of her deep, secret, intriguing smiles, two lines that had once been dimples indenting her cheeks. "Max," she said, "let's go. That's all. Let's leave everything and go. What does it matter? You'll find work. It needn't necessarily be Italy. Brazil, anywhere. We'll live on what you can earn and look after Mama ourselves."

His heart began to thump very slow and hard. "D'you mean it?"

"Yes," she said. "Yes. I've made up my mind. Let's go, Max. We've had enough."

Excitement, release, swept into him like power. Go, and never come back, never come back? he wanted to shout splendidly; but he remembered that this was her home she was leaving, this city, this house, this artificial tropical wilderness kept going by an intricate pumping system from the Nile, this pool covered, as if with a dust-sheet, by a wrinkled green scum of disuse. Instead, he said, "Oh God, Irene, I'm sure it's the right thing. I haven't wanted to persuade you, but I've always thought so. It's best for your mother, the children, all of us."

She had the pleased, quavering-faced look of someone who is trying to be modest about something big that he has done. "You've been so good, darling Max," she said

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emotionally. "You've been rotting away in that library."

THE next day he went into town for the first time for months. He made to himself the excuse of something he wanted to buy, but the truth was that he simply wanted to feel himself in the world, among people again. About half-past one he went into small Groppi's and ordered a vermouth and waited with a sense of pleasure for someone he knew to come in, so that he could tell him, "We're leaving, you know." He greeted an acquaintance across the room, but it was not until his drink was finished that an old friend, Mario Peretti (it was his wife with whom Max had had to curtail his golf games), came over and sat down in the empty chair at the little table.

"So?" said Mario, eyebrows lifting above the line of his thick glasses, "what brings you here? What an occasion!"

"Have a vermouth, Mario," said Max, grinning.

"O.K. And why not? Certainly I'll have a vermouth with you. It isn't many times that I get a chance for you to buy me a drink."

"And what about at my house?"

"Oh, that's not the same," said Peretti. "From the cellar it's not the same. It's not cash."

"Well, I suppose you've heard our big news," said Max, when their drinks had come.

"What's that?" said Mario, wiping the rim of his perfectly clean glass with a handkerchief.

"I'm sure Irene's been on the phone to Greta this morning?"

Peretti shrugged. "Greta was with Irene in town yesterday, but she didn't say anything to me. I haven't heard a word. What's it all about?"

"We decided last night. Mario, we're leaving. Packing up and walking out, at last," said Max.

Peretti drew in towards him across the table in admiring intimacy, smiling. "Is that so? So you're going? Well, good luck to you! That's the second lot I've heard about in two days. Did you hear that Jules Sidon is clearing out?"

"Sidon?"

"But Lila Sidon met Greta and Irene yesterday, and told them then. Came up to their table and announced it. Sidon's been given some big job—the South Seas, I think. He's going to lead an American expedition. They're leaving Cairo for good, too. She must have some property; they won't see that again. Shall we eat here? Are you going to have lunch with me?"

Max finished his drink in one long draw and stood up as he put the glass back in its saucer. "Mario, no, I can't. I must get back to Maadi, you know."

"But what for? It's lunch-time."

Max smiled. "Yes. That's it. I must get back for lunch."

IT was true that he felt he must get back to Maadi. He must get back there at once. He drove as if it were certain that there would be something waiting for him there in the house, something that would—what? He did not know, but he was sure that he would recognise it instantly for whatever it was, when he got there. The slam of the car door was muffled by the heavy silence that hung about the house. A sprinkler was making shining runnels on the dusty leaves of the bougainvillea; old Madame Achilet must have been resting upstairs and was not at her card-table. He closed the front door behind him and entered the big living-room where only the two abstract paintings seemed to keep their swirling, changing forms in the fuzzy light that came through the shutters. He went softly and heavily over the carpets, and as he was passing out of the room he realised that there was something—someone was sitting in one of the deep chairs. He turned and went to her. She sat with her legs drawn up tightly under her, like someone in pain. "Max?" she said, as if he were asleep and she did not want to wake him. "I've found out about the formalities, we'll get away without any difficulty. The house may

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give a bit of bother, but that can easily——" He did not speak, but he made a movement to hush her. She turned her head and the light that sifted into the room round the outline of the window near her lifted her face out of the dusk. He looked at her, fully, for a few seconds, but she could not see his face clearly and did not know that he could see hers.

When he had seen her, he sat down on the arm of her chair, and put out his hand; it touched her hair once, and then withdrew, and instead he began to stroke her hand. There was a strange silence about him, as if it were a struggle for him to do this. She was anxious to explain, asking, perhaps, for an explanation—"I was born here, everything's happened to me here. My whole life. This house—it's the house my father built for me——"

"Yes," he said, "of course."

"It's all over," she said, and tried to laugh.

"Yes, of course," he said. He sat on, silently stroking her hand. He could feel the set of his face in the dimness. "Yes, of course."

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Interlude of Joy

We were joyful all through that morning,
Oh, how joyful we were!
First the stones sparkled, the leaves and the flowers,
and then the sun;
A huge sun bristling with thorns, but so high up in the sky.
A nymph was gathering our cares and hanging them on trees,
A forest of Judas trees.
Cupids and satyrs played and sang,
and you could see rosy limbs in the black laurels,
the flesh of small children.
We were joyful all through the morning.
The abyss a covered well
and on top the tender foot of a young faun tapping.
Do you remember his laughter? Oh, how joyful we were!
Then clouds and rain and the moist earth.
You stopped laughing when you lay in the hut
and opened your big eyes as you gazed
at the archangel exercising with a flaming sword.
"It is odd," you said, "it is odd.
I don't understand human beings:
However much they play with colours
They are all black"

George Seferis
(*Translated by S. J. Papastavrou*)

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Andrew Shonfield

A Deadlock on the Left

WHEN one looks back over the intellectual performance of the Left in British politics in the recent past, one is left with an impression of inadequacy to which it is difficult to attach a name. It is as if the Labour Party were spiritually exhausted—unable to move forward confidently to the new ideas required to meet the radically changed needs of the working class of the late 1950's and equally unable to stop mouthing old slogans, which it knows are inapplicable but to which it remains compulsively attached. The "new thinking" of the younger generation of socialists, and in particular the distinguished attempt by Anthony Crosland in his *Future of Socialism* to formulate a systematic doctrine for a reformist British Left deliberately rejecting the notion of a root-and-branch attack on capitalism, have had disappointingly little effect on the intellectual processes of the party. That is not to say that these ideas have failed to influence the leadership; they are plainly very closely in line with Mr. Gaitskell's own thinking. But the change in the views held at the top has not produced any discernible movement in the body of the party.

There is a familiar catalogue of reasons for this failure which is offered by people inside the Labour Party—or better, two alternative catalogues depending on whether the critic conceives himself as belonging to the right or the left wing of the party. While accepting several of the items listed in both catalogues, I believe that there is a further reason which may be more important than any of these and which is generally not regarded as being important at all. It is that the Labour Party exhausted itself earlier in the struggle over the policy of nationalisation and has remained spiritually enfeebled because of its continued refusal to resolve the issue once and for all. The current compromise on nationalisation is both delicate and explosive, reflecting no resolution of any problem, but the unstable truce between the two most powerful men in the party, Hugh Gaitskell and Aneurin Bevan. Gaitskell and his wing of the party think that the programme of all-out nationalisation belongs to the primeval era of socialism. In their view it was a mistake to believe that the State would manage the country's industries better than private enterprise. There were a few public utilities, like electricity, which were natural monopolies and required centralised control; these were obvious candidates for public ownership. But for the rest, such control as the State needed to exercise in the interests of consumers or to further the broad economic purposes of the nation could best be achieved by insisting on greater public accountability from private enterprise. The formula is essentially similar to that of Roosevelt's New Deal: put industry in a glass-house, make it publish more information, place it in a position in which it knows it is exposed and vulnerable—then it will respond most anxiously to the demands made upon it in the name of the public's interest. Any odd recalcitrant firm can be dealt with individually. But the State ought not to get into the business of running any more industrial concerns, if there is any other way out.

That is, I believe, a fair summary of the underlying doctrine which guides the thought of the Gaitskell leadership. It has had a hard fight to get its position accepted, and even now there are a large number of militants in positions of important local influence in the Labour Party who would shudder away in outraged denial at this cold statement of aims. Nationalisation as an issue of doctrinal dispute within the Labour Party is by no means dead. But in the national leadership the only important figure who rejects the Gaitskell line, and believes

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wholeheartedly in the traditional doctrine, is Aneurin Bevan. He is, of course, an enormously important exception, if only because his personality provides a natural focus for left-wing sentiment. A party of the Left would be diminished by his absence. His importance is visibly reflected in the failure of the party platform to carry the official leader's views on nationalisation through to their logical conclusion.

In logic these views imply that the steel industry should be left in peace. There is no economic or political case for nationalising steel which does not apply with equal force to a couple of dozen other manufacturing industries. Yet it is steel alone which is threatened. Why? It is argued that the Labour Party is only returning to the status quo in the original programme of nationalisation which it had completed before the Tories disturbed it. But this will not do. For the Labour Party's programme has itself changed radically since the time when this status quo was established. In particular, two new ideas of Gaitskellite inspiration have been taken on board: first, the purchase of shares by the State in existing private enterprise companies, chosen because they are expected to be successful in business and thus provide the State with capital gains, and second, the specific rejection by the State of any active management function to go with this function of share ownership.

Now, the sole purpose of transferring the ownership of steel to the State is in order to exercise the function of management more effectively in the interests of society. This clashes with the new doctrine, for steel is no worse managed than the rest of private enterprise. But of course Bevan cares nothing for the new doctrine. He had to be prevented somehow from criticising it publicly and thus focusing the attention of the old-style militants upon it—which he certainly would have done, if an attempt had been made to drop the nationalisation of steel. For Bevan, steel nationalisation is not important in itself, but because it keeps his foot in the door, and leaves him the chance to push that door open to a further programme of nationalising other industries in the future. It is concrete evidence that the party platform still has not rejected the traditional formula of outright nationalisation, whatever the party leader's personal views may be.

Intellectuals and Experts

Thus the two wings of the party think of the purpose of steel nationalisation from two diametrically opposed viewpoints. For the Right it is *the last nationalisation*: in taking steel into public ownership a line is drawn which brings the programme of nationalisation to an end. To the traditional Left centred around Mr. Bevan the decision is taken to mean that the right wing has after all failed to halt the policy of nationalisation. Thus the right wing of the Labour Party has only won its struggle for a new industrial policy, taking account of the successes of capitalism in the mid-20th century instead of being wholly dominated by its failures of a quarter of a century ago, by the simple expedient of refusing combat with the other side. Although this may be an admirable administrative arrangement for keeping the party together with a sufficient air of solidarity to face a general election, it is not a device which makes for intellectual vigour. The lack of ideas, and even more the indifference to this lack, is indeed one of the most remarkable features of a party which has turned the leadership over to intellectuals. Both the leader, Mr. Gaitskell, and his shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Harold Wilson, were university dons of good calibre. Their approach to problems is that of the highly educated man of ideas. They are supported in the second rank by intellectuals like Jay, Jenkins, and Healey. This looks like the kind of leadership that the Labour Party had in the brief period when Sir Stafford Cripps came into his own in the late 1940's—and he, after all, was never the boss.

One would have expected that this leadership would have exercised an unusual intellectual stimulus on the party, especially in the field of economic affairs, in which both Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Harold Wilson achieved some academic success. Yet there has probably been less serious thinking on matters such as these since the intellectuals took over. It is as if the leadership believed that there were no problems which would not be best solved, once the party was in office, by their personal expertise. They do not want a lot of subcommittees arguing about such crucial questions as to what to do about sterling, how to deal with the danger of a flight of capital, and pushing their irritating little disagreements out into the open. The result is that the party appears to the outside observer to be less prepared in spirit for the many awkward problems which it will have to face as soon as it reaches office than it was even in 1945, when its whole task was enormously simplified by the existence of a comprehensive set of war-time controls and

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a lot of civil servants sitting ready in their offices with long experience of working them. The nation's economic resources were at that moment completely under the Government's control. Above all, there was a ring fence of exchange control round the country which allowed the Government to police all the money transactions between Britain and the rest of the world. Is it likely that the confidence of bankers abroad and of wealthy men at home in the wisdom and conservative financial policies of the British Socialist Party newly come to power will be so great that Mr. Gaitskell will not need this ring fence again?

I believe that the habit of not looking these problems fully in the face is all part of the nervousness which comes of having a leadership deeply divided on matters of doctrine, and afraid to argue. The Gaitskell wing has tended to think of the problem of *managing* any committee or working party concerned with ideas, rather than of using such bodies to achieve clarity about the party's purposes and methods. The over-riding concern has been to handle the fragile bits of unconsidered agreement inside the party with the utmost care, to keep the difficult questions out of the discussion, and always to aim at a formula which would avoid any firm commitment that might prove awkward to the administrator once in power. This explains the extraordinarily anodyne quality of the policy statements which the Labour Party has produced in the past few years. At best, their writers are able to endow them with a kind of forced jollity of a pepped-up Government White Paper. Governments may get away with this—there are occasions in which they may be able to argue that it was right to aim for a high level of public vagueness about their intentions—but it is hard to see why a radical party in opposition, whose very life-blood must be ideas, should think that this technique was appropriate to its needs. It seems, therefore, that although the Labour Party has the look of intellectual exhaustion, the real trouble is a deliberate policy of intellectual self-impoverishment. Had the leaders themselves been less competent intellectually, the party might have suffered less. There is no paradox here: this is not the first occasion on which the effect of having clever men at the top has been to stop other people thinking.

What one notices above all is the cramped postures induced by the clandestine shoving and manœuvring, which never develops into open struggle. The effect is a little like a posse of powerful boxers who are so anxious to keep an agreement not to fight among themselves that they walk about with their arms always tucked in stiffly at their sides; soon they forget how to use their fists at all. I do not underestimate the difficulties of persuading the Labour Party into recognising the need for a new policy to replace the dogma of all-out nationalisation. Nor do I ignore the real gains already made in the process: the devotees of State ownership as an end in itself have been gradually levered out of the position of spiritual dominance within the party, and put on the defensive. However, a price has been paid for this achievement, and it seems to me that it is a much bigger price than is generally recognised. The radical Left in Britain, already severely inhibited by the special position of privilege occupied by the trade union leaders at the centre of the Labour Party and the need to meet fixed trade union prejudices formed in the conditions of a quarter of a century ago, cannot afford the further burden of a truce between the official leadership and the militants of the party on all essential matters of doctrine. The result is that it has failed to respond with radical ideas to the new experiences of the 1950's. The energies of the leadership are so heavily engaged in fixing it so that the members of the lunatic fringe do not act too violently out of turn.

The Failure to Respond

THERE is one outstanding instance of this failure to respond, which illustrates most sharply the damage caused by the frozen doctrinal dispute over nationalisation and the rôle of public enterprise in general. It is worth examining in detail.

The old question of the efficiency of private enterprise as an instrument of economic progress has been raised in a new guise by the vastly increased weight of research and development expenditure in modern industry. It is evident that when the pace of technological advance is speeded up, so that new machines and processes are being brought in more rapidly, the cost of research as a proportion of total costs is going to be a lot higher. This has been a feature of both American and Russian industry in the 1950's. In Britain, industrial research received a great fillip from the big military programme which was triggered off by the Korean war. In addition, the atomic energy programme, started by Mr. Attlee in the late 'forties chiefly as a

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device (he has since explained) for impressing the Americans with Britain's continued great-power status, absorbed increasing amounts of money. The State is the dominant partner in British industrial research; it performs a sizeable share of it in its own laboratories and pays for the greater part of what is done by private industry. The latest comprehensive information available, covering the whole range of research and development in industry, is for the financial year 1955–56.* The amount spent in that year is estimated at some £300 million—which is roughly the same amount as was spent on all forms of advertising in this country. Of this, £220 million came out of Government funds—used either in the Government's own laboratories or to finance research by private industry—while the financial contribution from private enterprise amounted to just under £70 million. Incidentally, the sum reported as spent on research by the nationalised industries, £4 million, seems startlingly small for a group of enterprises whose sales were running close to £3,000 million in that year.

Looking now exclusively at the research and development work done inside industry—that is, leaving aside the Government's own research stations and the universities—the total amounted to £190 million in 1955–56. Rather more than two-thirds of this was financed by the State. The balance between public and private funds in Britain's research effort may have altered slightly since then, as the Government has cut down on some of its earlier defence projects particularly in the development of new aeroplanes, and private firms have taken over the cost. There has at the same time been an increase of around 40 per cent in the expenditure of the Ministry of Supply, which is the main Government department concerned, on research and development. Assuming that this is fairly typical of the general rate of advance in spending on research and development, and making an allowance for some transfer of financial responsibility from the Government to private enterprise, it looks as though the total sum spent on research and development conducted within industry is likely to fall short of £300 million today. It is impossible to be more precise about the figure. The basic assumption on which it rests is that while the research spending of a small group of *élite* British companies has been rising in recent years, the basic dependence on Government finance in the industries which are responsible for most of the research and development in this country has not changed significantly since 1956.

SOMEHOW the impression has got around that Britain's effort in the field of industrial research, although naturally smaller, still stands up to comparison with that of the United States. Few people would guess that American industry is putting rather more than ten times as much money into research as British industry. One of the reasons for the current British attitude of unconcern is, I believe, an accident of statistics. It so happens that the last full-scale analysis of British and American scientific endeavour by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research* used American data for the year 1953—that is just before the great explosion of U.S. industrial research in the middle and late 1950's. It therefore leaves out the crucial bit of the story. During the four years following 1953 American industry's annual research and development budget doubled, and it is now estimated to be running at a rate of round $9,000 million a year. It compares with a current figure of the order of $850 million a year in British industry.† Nor can we derive any consolation from a comparison of the amount of research done outside industry, in universities and government laboratories: the Americans spend much more there too.

These calculations are of necessity hazardous. It is predictable that the experts will rise up in a body and protest against the making of any kind of guess about what has happened to British industrial research during the interval of three or four years since the first precise figures were collected. But unless one does guess, one can rarely say anything which is relevant to *current* policy. Meanwhile, in their determination to stay precise and fact-bound at all costs, the experts go on making comparisons on the basis of the irrelevant American figure for 1953. This is not the first time that a set of honest, reliable, and out-of-date statistics have got themselves firmly embedded in the intellec-

* *Estimates of Resources devoted to Scientific and Engineering Research and Development in British Manufacturing Industry, 1955*, published by D.S.I.R.

* *Annual Report of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy, 1956–57.*

† The figure is simply the dollar equivalent of £300 million—my estimate of the upper limit of current British expenditure on research in industry.

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tual folklore of a nation, and have robbed it of a necessary feeling of anxiety.

The Pace of Technology

THE feeling of anxiety is badly needed. The Americans have taken another leap forward; we shall only see the results later on, when the huge effort which is now going into industrial research shows up in a flood of new and advanced products during the 1960's. At the moment we are so surprised and delighted by the recent evidence of high American manufacturing costs, and the consequent gain in our own competitive power in the dollar markets, that many people have come to talk as if U.S. industrial power had passed its apogee. This is the natural reaction to the exaggeration of the American industrial advantage during the great post-war crisis of the dollar gap. We appear for the present to have overcome this American advantage in international trade with the help of our lower wages, superimposed on a considerable improvement in our industrial performance. But the new equilibrium in our relations with the dollar world is a highly unstable one. The dynamic element in it is the drive of American technology. This is not new. There have been occasions in the past when American technology has got so far ahead that the rest of the world has found itself facing a structural dollar gap in its trade, and has had to rely on American charity to close it. There is no reason to suppose that this could never happen again.

The same acceleration of the pace of technology seems to have taken place in Soviet Russia during the middle 1950's, though the facts are less open to measurement there. The activities of the Soviet Cabinet Committee on Automation and of other bodies whose task is to get new scientific discoveries absorbed into industrial techniques as rapidly as possible suggest that the Soviet effort in this field ought to be taken very seriously. Meanwhile, in this country, State support for the research effort of industry is now being whittled down.

It would be wrong for Britain to try to match the range of industrial research being conducted in the United States or Russia. For one thing, there are fields of endeavour in which the two biggest military powers, with an annual arms expenditure several times as large as ours, are bound to have an advantage in the development of new products and processes. This plainly applies to aeroplanes. American supersonic bombers are already so far advanced that we cannot hope to compete with them in the next stage of civil jet airliner development, with planes travelling at over 1,000 miles per hour. It would cost, according to a recent statement by Mr. Peter Masefield of Bristol Aircraft, £300 million—the equivalent of our whole annual expenditure on research and development in industry—to finance the development work on this single project.

In nuclear development, too, the ultimate prizes are likely to go to those who can afford to go on experimenting on a wide front with a great many different types of atomic reactors. The initial British lead in atomic energy was a freak; it was the outcome of an unusual concentration of Government resources on projects where Britain started with the advantage of a highly developed military technology after the war. No doubt, we shall still see some commercial benefit from our freakish achievement for a few years to come. But British nuclear equipment is most unlikely to become a major export industry—if only because this is the kind of thing that a developed industrial country wants to make for itself; while the undeveloped countries will probably not have much use for the type of atomic power station that has been developed specifically to meet Britain's industrial energy needs.

There has undoubtedly been an excessive concentration of Britain's limited research effort on atoms and aeroplanes. Both are very exciting, full of prestige, but not likely to be commercial winners in the long run for a nation which has to look to its exports. The danger of our achievements in these fields of endeavour is precisely that they dazzle. This, together with the accident of bias in the accepted statistical comparison of British research with American, has created the illusion that there is nothing to worry about—that British brains pegging away quietly in lots of quiet back rooms are doing their stuff for the nation.

We must be quite clear about the fields of research in which we can afford to do less than the Americans. About the most phoney argument on this whole subject is the one that starts out from a comparison of *per capita* expenditure on research in Britain and the United States—as if research were some kind of commodity like food or drink, whose proper level of output depended on the number of individual appetites for it. The truth is, of course, that unless a national industry is pooling its research effort

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with the industries of other nations—as, for instance, the members of the European Common Market are pooling their research on atomic energy—it will probably lose out in the competition for the development of new products, when it fails to match the research effort of its competitors in quantity or quality. It is altogether too facile to assume that the quality of the British research effort is likely to be so much better that it will offset the huge discrepancy in the sheer weight of money spent in foreign countries, particularly in the United States. This is the kind of thing that scientists are sometimes inclined to suggest when one faces them with international comparisons of the size of their research effort but it is the best treated as an example of a certain vocational arrogance, which is perhaps born of the experience of making an occasional discovery of a brand new fact. It is true that since salaries are higher in the United States, and a considerable part of the cost of research (perhaps as much as half) consists of the money paid to the researchers, the same sum of money will produce more man-hours of work in Britain than in the United States. But we cannot afford to push this particular advantage too hard—otherwise our scientists will leave to take up the more highly paid jobs on the other side. Some of them have been doing so; and until more is spent on research work in this country the Americans are likely to be able to outbid us for the services of some of the ablest Englishmen.

There is also the suggestion that a lot of American research overlaps and is wasteful, because of competition between firms within an industry. But this is an argument which cuts both ways. There might be something to be gained by exercising a more deliberate co-operative effort in research in Britain. But it is not necessarily the single co-ordinated effort, rather than the multiplicity of independent endeavours, which pays off in the search for new products. Overlap in intellectual activity is not necessarily a bad thing. There is, no doubt, some ideal balance between duplication and co-ordination, which will achieve the most economical result; and there is no reason to suppose that the United States has got it. But equally there is nothing to suggest that we are any closer to it than the Americans.

There are then two separate issues of policy. One is that the total sum devoted to industrial research and development is inadequate, by the standards of the technological pace of the late 1950's. We must accept the fact that a smaller country with smaller industries will have to spend a proportionately larger part of its earnings on research in those industries in which it hopes to compete with a great one. The only escape from this is by merging the national industries into a larger international complex.

The second issue concerns the distribution of our enlarged research effort. Hitherto, we have concentrated the greater part of our resources on the big glamour lines—aircraft and nuclear energy, where our long-run chances of competing for markets with the military powers are not very good. But when we make the decision to switch over some of our resources from these military lines to other areas of British industry which have been badly neglected for some time past, we must be careful not to underestimate the solid benefits which have been spread through certain sections of British industry by the Government's defence contracts. Electronic computers are an outstanding example. It is no coincidence that Britain has a big and advanced computer industry, and Germany has not. Defence spending on guided missiles—which are in fact flying computers of an extremely sturdy and reliable kind—has allowed the enterprising electronics firms in this country to get ahead. Without these Government funds, they would not have done so. And unless the Government continues to provide them with large sums of money to support their research effort, they are going to do less in the future.

Tories and Socialists

It is interesting to find a number of the more far-sighted Conservatives, including some Ministers, more concerned at present with this problem of the proper rôle of government in British industrial research than the Labour Party appears to be. At any rate, these Tories are trying to find a way of maintaining and perhaps increasing the State's contribution to the cost of research and development, even though the defence programme, which has hitherto financed most of it, is reduced. However, it is frankly difficult for the present Government to find a formula, within the framework of Tory doctrine, which will justify the extension of public enterprise on any large scale to serve ordinary manufacturing industry. It is the scale which now matters. A little of it would perhaps get by without protest from the Conservative Party Conference. But if the total began to run into

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tens of millions of pounds, let alone to approach the sum which the Government hands out for research and development on the defence budget at present, people would begin to ask awkward questions. It would not only be the Conservative Party militants who would want to know why private enterprise, working in the ordinary way for a profit, was failing to meet the community's economic needs.

How explain the remarkable failure of the Labour Party to take any serious interest in this problem?

It is one in which the traditional predilection of the British Left for public enterprise admirably coincides with national need. For once, it is the Tories who are hobbled by their ideology in any effort to deal with the matter intelligently. There is no doubt that much of British industry is suffering from a deficiency of research, outside the particular fields in which the Government is at present spending public money. The Government's Advisory Council on Scientific Policy has listed some of the industries—"shipbuilding, building and contracting, and some sections of the textiles industries," where "the research effort falls considerably short of the best standards in other countries." Of industry at large it says, "the resources devoted to civil research and development have been, and still are, far too small for a country whose competitive position in world trade is dependent upon the economic development of new products and new processes."*

Even where a team of British industrial research workers brings off a successful coup, the basic facilities for moving rapidly from the stage of scientific discovery to a fully developed saleable product seem often to be lacking here. A recent example was the important discovery made by scientists of the Beecham Group, working under Dr. Chain, of a new and much more efficient approach to the making of penicillin. It was described by the company as a "breakthrough." But Beechams' next move was to arrange a tie-up with an American firm, whose contribution was to be to provide the know-how for the development of this new product to the stage where it could be manufactured. This stage of development, after the basic research had been done, is often the more difficult and expensive part of the business. Beechams decided, sensibly enough, that since it did not possess the facilities for clinical testing on a large scale nor the considerable number of experts required to push this project forward rapidly, it had better find an American partner. It should be emphasised that Beechams spends, by British standards, a lot of money on research. This scientific dependence of British industry on American brains is one of the facts which had received least attention in the recent arguments about the growing stake of U.S. capital in this country. Mr. J. H. Dunning, who has made a study of American firms in British industry, has calculated that the amount of research and development work made available to U.S. subsidiaries and affiliates in this country by their parent companies exceeds the whole of the research and development done by British industry.†

IT IS not fanciful to suggest that the conspicuous lack of interest in this problem on the part of the Labour Party goes back to the frozen and unresolved dispute about nationalisation.

The fact which has to be explained is why this subject which looks like a "natural" for socialists has been overlooked by the socialist "new thinkers," who have become so influential in the post-Attlee leadership of the party. The answer, I believe, is that these people are so bored with the whole subject of nationalisation, so relieved to have coaxed the party out of its obsession with the subject, and so concerned to maintain the truce which holds the two wings of the party precariously together, that their minds instinctively shy away from anything which looks as if it might open up the whole tedious issue again. While they are prepared to pay the agreed forfeit—the nationalisation of steel—in order to secure the truce, they do not wish to see any further extension of public enterprise in British industry beyond that. Even where the State is to take over the ownership of shares of companies—under the Labour Party's programme—the aim is to avoid any suggestion of public enterprise; all the emphasis is placed on the State's rôle of passive *rentier*, avoiding any interest in management, and exclusively concerned with capital gains.

But what about the other wing of the party? Why have not the Left traditionalists, associated with Mr. Bevan, seized upon the new field for public enterprise in industrial research which positively invites attention? The explanation

* *Annual Report of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy, 1956–57.*

† *American Investment in British Manufacturing Industry.* By J. H. DUNNING. Allen & Unwin. 35s.

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here is that for those who continue to believe in all-out nationalisation as the key to socialism the new field is not particularly exciting or important. After all, they start by assuming that private enterprise will be inferior to public enterprise in dealing with a wide range of industrial problems. So the demonstration that there is a fresh spot where public enterprise is needed will not impress them much. This particular deficiency of the private enterprise system is politically significant only if it is regarded as a special case. For those who accept the present mixed economy, with an overwhelming predominance of private enterprise in it, there is a novel problem about the State's future rôle in meeting industry's research needs out of public funds. But for those who are looking forward to a general extension of the domain of public enterprise in industry anyway, there is not.

Some important policy decisions will have to be made about the relationship between the State and the private firms receiving Government money to finance useful research and development. If the operation succeeds, some of these firms will make very big profits out of the development of new products. What return ought the State to demand? Should it have the right to a certain number of shares in the companies which it has helped? At the moment, under the system of research contracts between the Ministry of Supply and certain private firms, the latter receive the use of a complete factory with equipment and all labour expenses covered, and get paid a management fee to conduct the research that the Ministry wants. If one of the products resulting from this research goes into commercial production, the firm is allowed to take all the profits minus 20 per cent, which it has to pay to the Government as a licence fee. Since at present all these contracts are for military work, the question of a commercial return on them only arises occasionally—usually when some foreign government wants to buy a weapon, as Sweden is now buying the *Bloodhound* missile from Bristol Aircraft and Ferranti. But if the same Government contracts were devoted to civilian research the commercial returns would probably be vast.

The second point, which should interest socialists and liberals alike, is that Government funds of this kind will inevitably tend to go to the established firms with established reputations for conducting intelligent and reliable research. It usually takes some years before such a reputation can be established by a newcomer. The result is therefore likely to be that the power and wealth of existing successful enterprises will be greatly increased, that the rich will become richer, and that there is likely to arise a kind of feudal aristocracy of those companies like Rolls-Royce and I.C.I. which will be in an enormously privileged position, simply because they already exist and are successful.

This new feudal power may be regarded as an unavoidable feature of the present phase of high capitalism—the phase which is characterised by the attenuation of the forces of the market and the emergence of the principle of price leadership by a few giant firms. But whichever way it is, it presents an important social problem. The Labour Party's plans to do something about limiting the wealth of the individual owners of capital do not touch this question. The issue here is not one of excessive private ownership of wealth, but rather of the privileged and powerful position of certain established groups of management.

War, Peace, and Planning

THE central fact in this whole argument is that industrial research to-day is big business, and likely to become a lot bigger.

After allowing for all the economies that might be obtained in Britain by cutting down the most expensive type of work on aircraft, missiles and nuclear energy, to which we have hitherto devoted far too large a proportion of our resources, and after taking account of the British advantage in being able to obtain a given number of scientific man-hours at a lower salary cost than the Americans, it is still hard to see how we can hope to compete with advancing U.S. technology over a wide range of industry, without spending at least two or three times as much as we do at present on industrial research and development. This means something of the order of £500–£1,000 million a year—which would make the business of research comparable in sheer size to the coal industry. As a piece of public enterprise, the management of this activity would plainly be a much more complicated affair than running any of the existing nationalised industries. Intelligent use of public funds to further the development of new products will entail constant policy decisions about the future shape of British industry as a whole, about the long-term objectives that it ought to be pursuing in the national interest; and some of these decisions will have to be made at Cabinet

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level. The final upshot is that a new and looser type of long-term planning is brought in by the back door, after the old type of detailed socialist planning has been thrown out decisively from the front. It is to be observed that the principle of such long-term planning of certain national resources is well established in several capitalist countries, including the United States.

The practical arguments for much more State enterprise in industrial research show up most clearly in war. During war, when public money is spent without stint on research, the process of industrial innovation within the chosen areas of endeavour is enormously speeded up. It is surely plain that a nation at war which refused to use public enterprise and relied on the normal processes of capitalism to speed up the tempo of industrial innovation—on the theory that because more profits are being made out of the manufacture of arms and military equipment, private firms will naturally spend more money on the necessary research and development—would be beaten by its enemies. We are in danger now of taking a commercial beating, because some of our rivals use public funds without inhibition on the rapid development of new products and processes, while in Britain the Government is conscientiously niggardly on everything except the making of destructive weapons. It is worth pointing out, moreover, that even if British industrialists were more research-minded than they are, and spent as high a proportion of their earnings on it as American capitalists do today, this would not be enough. Because American industry is much bigger, the same proportion here would mean a smaller *absolute* total. This is where the big have a decisive natural advantage over the small. The only way in which this British disadvantage can be overcome—barring a most unlikely decision on the part of British firms to spend a considerably larger proportion of their income than the Americans on research, and therefore to take a lower rate of profit—is by a generous draft on public funds.

FINALLY, there is the beguiling argument which has acquired some vogue recently in the British Left that none of this really matters much in the long run, because the economic problem in Britain has in any case ceased to be important.* Economic growth, it is alleged, is assured by the normal process of capitalism, aided by a little chivvying from the State here and there, and the only question is whether our standard of living goes up by, say, 2 per cent or by 3 per cent a year.

The truth is, however, that a failure to keep up with the best technological standards of foreign competitors could mean a sharp drop in the standard of living of an exporting nation. This would happen if the lag in British technology resulted in the exclusion of Britain from world trade in a whole range of newer products which will be coming along in the next few years. It might then be that Britain would be pushed out of the first rank of international traders, and would be forced to concentrate on the older and simpler manufactured products, where it would have to match the low wage costs of competitors in this field. These competitors a couple of decades from now will probably be some of the underdeveloped countries, who are industrialising themselves rapidly at present. The technological pace is altogether hotter, for the backward as well as for the most advanced, since governments have taken a hand in forcing it.

It seems a pity that one of the consequences of the disillusion of the Left with socialist planning and public enterprise has been a tendency to overlook such facts as these and to play down the rôle of the State in making contemporary capitalism work more efficiently in the public interest. But until capitalism is explicitly accepted by the Labour Party as a permanent, proper, and indeed superior form of organisation for the overwhelming bulk of industry, it will be hard to remove the doctrinal confusion which at present impoverishes the thinking of the British Left.

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* See *The Future of British Socialism*. By ANTHONY CROSLAND. Cape. 42s. J. K. GALBRAITH'S *The Affluent Society* (Hamish Hamilton) with its general thesis about the unimportance of economic growth has also been influential.

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Michael Astor

Childhood at Cliveden

A Memoir of the Twenties

WHEN I think of Cliveden, and try to recapture the atmosphere of the house, and a sense of the orderliness of the life which gave it its rhythm and which provided the setting for the exciting and glamorous life which my mother led there, I often think of it in terms of a series of sounds. The background music varied with the seasons. In summer it would be the motor mowers on the lawn below the terrace, and the swifts whistling through the air and fluttering into the eaves above the nursery windows. In winter it was the crackle of the log fire in the hall which burnt day and night, and the sound of the cowlings on the roof which revolved and clanked in the wind. On a still day the chime of the clock tower could be heard far away in the woods or from the other side of the river. At night the chime was turned off and was only turned on again at eight in the morning. But each department on the place had its own particular sounds. There was Mr. Harrison, the nightwatchman, going on his rounds from the cellars to the top landings, lighting his way with a torch. He walked with a slow and measured tread which made the floor boards creak. At certain points he would stop to register his progress on a series of time-clocks. This made a loud click, and punctuated the sound of his steps. At five o'clock the housemaids started their day—cleaning, scrubbing, dusting, and tidying; in the hall, the drawing-rooms and passages; hurrying so as to become invisible before the first guests came down to breakfast. On the landings they moved with light nimble footsteps, like mice scuttling from one corner to another. At five-thirty in the summer, and a little later in the winter, the sounds came from the stables; the clanking of pails, water running into buckets, and the firm, quick steps of Mr.

CHILDHOOD AT CLIVEDEN *is part of a work in progress, which has as its central theme my mother and her generation of friends, and her unusual personality as seen from the different points of view of various of her friends. Some ten people have contributed different chapters. The story starts in Virginia; it moves to Leicestershire, to Cliveden, to Plymouth, and to Westminster. Different voices take up the story at different points of the journey. It has a chronology and (I trust) a coherence.*

One of the terms of reference which I gave to each contributor was to avoid panegyric and flattery and to record observations as truthfully as possible. Some of the contributors undertook to do this only on the understanding that they would not have to account for their words to the principal subject under review. It is for this reason that the date of publication of this book must remain a matter for my discretion.

"Childhood at Cliveden" is set in the period 1925 to 1935. It contains a reference to the "Cliveden set," which is dismissed perfunctorily as almost a figment of the imagination. There was, in a sense, a Cliveden set which represented a certain attitude towards Munich and Neville Chamberlain's attempts at appeasing Hitler. This I have treated with in a subsequent chapter called "Politics and Public Life" "Childhood at Cliveden" is concerned only with life at home as I saw it as a child. *M. A.*

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Brooks and the grooms. At six o'clock in the summer, and while it was still dark in the winter, the horses, wearing their blankets, moved off in pairs. The start of early morning exercise made a particular echo. At first it was the metallic sound of hooves on cobbled paving, which was then picked up by the wings of the house, this time with a softer note as the hooves touched the gravel of the drive.

At seven o'clock Nannie would have her early morning cup of tea brought to her in bed by the nursery maid. She slept in the night nursery in a four-poster brass bed between Jakie and me. She had once had a cold and thought at the time that she might give it to us, and ever since then she had slept with her head away from ours and her toes opposite our pillows. By the time her tea arrived Jakie and I would already have been carrying on a muted conversation; the arrival of the tea merely signalled the official opening of our day. Like all children we started the day with great gusto; with talk, laughter, banging of doors, and running up and down the passages. By now the house was fully awake except for the guests who would not be called till eight or half-past.

At eight o'clock there was breakfast in the servants' hall in the basement, and in the steward's room on the ground floor where Lee, Mrs. Addison the housekeeper, Arthur, my father's valet, my mother's personal maid, and one or two visiting servants had their meals. At nine o'clock Lee went up to the first floor and performed his first ritual of the day. With a flourish he would pick up a large drumstick and, slowly at first, but working up to a fine crescendo of noise, he sounded the gong for dining-room breakfast. The opening bars of this were like thunder rumbling in the distance, then the crash of the storm and, to give it a note of artistry, the sound would be made to roll and fade out slowly. Lee performed this function, like he did everything else, immaculately and with a style of his own. After this everyone, at least officially, was awake and the day had started in earnest.

IF IN THE departments of the house to which I have referred I include the family, then at this stage we need not venture as far afield as the saw-bench or the carpenter's shop to find a regular cacophony of sound, most of it coming from the children's landing. But from the floor below the chief soloist has already started a rehearsal for the intricate part she plays, using several instruments at the same time. My mother was called at eight o'clock with a tray of coffee and fruit. She then spent half an hour reading the Bible and *Science and Health*. This was called "doing the lesson," and the lesson was invariably done, every morning and usually twice a day. This was part of the business of "getting one's thinking right for the day." Now if at this stage the reader imagines that he can detect in this process something parallel, though perhaps not similar, to the meditation and communion which signals the start of the day in monastic houses of ecclesiastical teaching, he will be sadly mistaken. The "lesson" was more an effort of concencentration and will than anything else. In the first place it had to be because the telephone kept ringing. If that was cut off the interruption would be from one of the children, or a nephew or niece, looking in to say good-morning. This visit might result in laughter, argument, vituperation—or another telephone call. In any case it always meant that certain passages of the lesson were read again, this time out loud and with a prefix: "Now keep still and listen to this, it will really help you. There's *nothing* like the life of St. Paul. Michael, you must study it." This was spoken in a gentle voice as my mother turned the pages of the Bible and concentrated on the words of the text. But quickly the tone of her voice would vary; a note of humour would come into it and, either to catch the interest of the child, or because what she was about to read out was such a mouthful that she could not properly digest it herself, she would look up and say in the purest imitation of a Southern Negro woman, "Yassir, I'se gonna help yew. Me and Mistah Jesus is gonna help yew. . . ."

After Mrs. Eddy came the cold bath and

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physical exercises, my mother still in her bath-cap and with grease on her face touching her toes or standing on her head. This was interspersed with calling for Rose Harrison, telling her that she had put out the wrong dress, and telling her not to talk so much. One of the points about Rose was that she talked nearly as much as my mother and, in her broad Yorkshire accent, she always answered back. "It's no good you going on like that, M'Lady. You told me last night to give you the yellow print and now that you've got it you're not *satisfied*." Rose always emphasised the last word in her sentences. But Rose's words would probably be lost to my mother, who by this time would be telling her to do something quite different, or calling upstairs to a child—or else the telephone would be ringing again. My father, who woke early, used to take the dogs for a walk and join the rest of the family for breakfast at nine o'clock in the dining-room.

Breakfast would hardly be finished before my mother would be downstairs and dealing with the housekeeping arrangements for the day. Monsieur Gilbert, the chef, in his white jacket and carrying his menu book, would come into her boudoir to discuss the meals. After this it would be Lee, or the housekeeper, or the gardener who had come in to arrange the flowers. My mother was herself an expert and meticulous housekeeper and nothing escaped her notice. Her main work in the morning was with her secretary—answering letters, issuing invitations, or writing out notes for a speech—but before this the children had to be given their "lesson." From an early age it was impressed on us that in some respects we would be lucky if we survived the rest of the day without disaster if we neglected this part of our duties. Although I cannot pretend that we regarded this period as anything more than a routine duty which had to be performed, we usually preferred the lesson to be given by our mother rather than our father. It offered us more chances to digress from the subject in hand. My father's method of giving us the lesson, although it followed the pattern of reading extracts from the Bible and *Science and Health*, contained a quiet logic of his own. The whole episode became more portentous; and when it was finished we would leave his room wondering if we would ever be able to live up to the expectations of this good man who, at times, took such a stern and uncompromising view of life.

THE life of the children in the house ran to certain prescribed rules. We had a routine, and this was fortunate as it provided us with a regularity which was in contrast to much else that was irregular and surprising. After breakfast and "the lesson" we went out riding with Brookie; every day except Sundays. Like all grooms and people professionally associated with horses, his clothes were dapper and his manner brisk. For riding with the young gentlemen he wore breeches, gaiters, and a bowler; for driving them in the tub-cart a dark brown suit and a bowler; and for taking them out hunting, top boots and a short felt top-hat. Riding was a serious form of pleasure; it was fun but it was not frivolous. I remember one day walking over to the stables carrying a cardboard shield with a large red cross painted on it (no doubt an influence from the Crusades) and a wooden dagger tucked into my stocking beneath my breeches. A young Don Quixote, perhaps? The knight errant idea appealed to me at the time. Brookie, however, was no Sancho Panza. He confiscated the shield and the dagger until the ride was over. There were limits to what his young gentlemen could wear out riding.

Brookie, like most people on the place, took a pride in his work, in his horses and, I think, in us. His job was simply to take us riding and he made it as interesting as he could. He varied his rides with clockwork regularity; up the road to the paddocks at Hedsor, through the woods to Taplow Court, or a game of hide-and-seek in the Pheasantry, with my brother and me riding flat out, in and out of the trees, trying to catch up with him. The culmination of this came in the winter when hunting started. There were certain members of the Garth Hunt whom

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Brookie treated reverentially; his reverence was based on their reputation in the hunting field. A word of approval from Colonel Barker, the Master, on the turn-out of the Cliveden stables, and Brookie's day was made. The Garth hounds ostensibly hunted foxes, but even in those days the suburbs and allotments of Maidenhead, Bracknell, and other neighbouring towns were encroaching on the Garth country. For every fox there were a dozen cats, and my thoughts on the subject became almost as confused as those of the hounds. Were we hunting cats or was it foxes? Brookie at any rate, with two small children on leading reins, usually hunted Colonel Barker from a discreet distance. "Barker by name and Barker by nature," was what they called him, those members of the field who had experienced the rough side of his tongue. Bark he might, but his jumping days were over, and he knew all the roads and gates in his country. He seldom broke out of a fast trot, and when he did venture over an obstacle it was usually one which our ponies could manœuvre.

In some ways the thing that impressed me most about Brookie was the way he conducted his home life; it appeared in every respect to be so totally different from our own. Mrs. Brooks was a large, good-natured woman, and she and Brooks had met, many years ago, when she was working in a laundry delivering the washing. Whether he established his supremacy in those early courting days, or whether that came later, I do not know, but ever since I knew her Mrs. Brooks did exactly what Mr. Brooks told her. When we came back into the stable-yard after riding we would go to say good-morning to Mrs. Brooks and to collect the dogs' dinners. Brookie would open the door and shout upstairs: "Mother, come down here!" A sound of scuffling and Mrs. Brooks came clattering down the stairs. "Oh, Mr. Michael, you *do* look well!" she would beam, "*Oh*, you do look well! *Doesn't* he look well? Oh, I say, you *do* look well!" At this point Brookie would interject, "Now shut up, Mother, let's have those dinners—quick, and hurry up about it!" Clatter of feet going upstairs, a quick turn-round, and Mrs. Brooks would appear with three plates of dog's food. "Oh, Snuff, he is a *nice* dog! Oh, he's *such* a nice dog. Oh, *isn't* he a nice dog?" and once more Brookie would bring the conversation to a close: "That's enough of that, Mother. Upstairs!" And Mrs. Brooks would clatter up the stairs again to prepare the lunch and attend to those domestic details which, no doubt, made this side of Brookie's life a marital bliss.

At half-past-two every day Mrs. Gibbons (Nannie was accorded the honorary title of *Mrs.* in deference to her age and her position in the house), Mr. Brooks, and my younger brother and I, wrapped up against the elements, went for a drive in the tub-cart. We were given no option about these drives, although we often rebelled against their monotony. Several hours of every week we drove round Hedsor or Burnham Beeches; two small boys peering over the edge of the cart, staring disconsolately at Wagtail's hindquarters. When we came in there was tea in the nursery, with a fat, kindly old mademoiselle whose name I cannot remember. Our French, such as it was, was colloquial from an early age. At five o'clock, clean and spruce, we were sent downstairs. The grown-ups would be having their tea in the hall, and there we entered a different world: the exciting world of my mother and her friends.

MY MOTHER'S gaiety acted like magic with small children, her own or anyone else's. It was thrilling and contagious. She enjoyed the whole game of turning everything into a farce, of making fun of the awe-inspiring things of life which was what every child prayed for. And it was not just fun, it was a riot. With children she was in her element. From her they met with something quite different from the usual set of instructions passed on to them by parents and nannies. The average grown-up, when faced with a child—his own or someone else's—will, in self-defence, remember the cardinal rule which is: "Don't get it over-excited." My mother's approach was a more positive one. Her idea was to make it laugh. She scored

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success after success. Children in slums, children in prams, children with weeks of grime all over their faces, and cosseted little Lord Fauntleroys of children all provided enthusiastic audiences for the very personal performance which she gave entirely for their benefit. This was her age group: the very young and wholly un-selfconscious. With anything in between the age of innocence and the fully-matured creature her performance often misfired.

These sessions in the evening, when all was laughter and high spirits, could not always be sustained. At times my mother's mood was admonitory rather than encouraging: "do's" and "dont's" were flung around the room, sometimes for good measure, at other times more pointedly in one particular direction. If a child were unlucky enough to be singled out for preferential treatment of this kind he could be made to feel small, wicked, and foolish, and childish laughter could be turned into childish tears of indignation in no time at all. It was part of our training to avoid this kind of situation, and especially to hide any tears; because tears meant being ordered to stop crying, an order so perplexing that it occasionally worked. The essential tactic, when a general skirmish of words looked like taking a turn for the worse, was to keep the battle fluid and confused and try to avoid being cornered. In a critical moment Jakie and I could rely on each other for support and, provided my father kept out of it, we could either of us create a fairly impressive diversion of our own. The drama was too rapid to count for much—when we were still very young.

There were, as well, quieter moods which were every bit as enjoyable and a good deal less precarious. When there were no visitors, which was not often, my father would read us an adventure story, or my mother would read us *Uncle Remus*; or else we would go into the boudoir, turn the lights out, and lie in front of the fire and listen to her "nigger" stories which she remembered from her own childhood. These stories were witty and humorous, with a touch of pathos which is inevitable in any Negro story. My mother acted every part with her voice, making her characters sound lazy and confiding, boastful or frightened. We were listening to the world of the coloured people at Mirador; a world of friendly, puzzled, grown-up children, interspersed with the high-spirited behaviour of her brothers who, in turn, assumed the childish form of the Negroes when she introduced her father into the picture.

At an early age we learnt the habit of mixing with older people and total strangers. We were taught to be polite, particularly to servants and people who could not answer back. But familiarity, if it did not breed contempt, at least ensured that we became no respecters of persons. Mr. Lloyd George was distinguished in our eyes for his exceptionally long hair. Lord Balfour was tall, kindly, and detached, as a grown-up should be. J. L. Garvin had an engaging but odd way of speaking, and looked as if his eyes would pop out of his head. Lionel Curtis, with his shaggy grey head, looked to us like a man who probably knew everything there was to be known, but he gave himself away by his jokes which, we could have told him, were not faintly funny. But Dr. Salter from Plymouth found us in the woods where Jakie and I made our hide-out. He came on us in our own territory when we were peacefully trying to smoke the pipes which we had spent hours making under the unobservant eye of Stainer in the carpenter's shop. He sensibly made no reference to this. Instead, we talked together about subjects that interested us; such as the behaviour of wild animals, and the chances of avoiding having to go away to school by taking to the woods, like Jack Shepherd the highwayman, and living in the caves he once lived in on the river bank. (We never tried this when the time came: it was my turn to go first and we both locked ourselves in the lavatory where we yelled like dervishes until my father was sent for and ordered us to open up.) Dr. Salter took us into his confidence and we treated him more seriously than the late Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary. He had

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not quite their imposing manner; but even that to a child was reassuring.

My Uncle Bob Brand has told me that he remembers one day coming to Cliveden to help entertain members of an international delegation collected from all over the world, who had come down from London for the afternoon. These elderly and possibly distinguished visitors were assembled in the hall when he arrived and my mother was greeting them collectively and individually. (I remember an occasion like this. Some of them were Chinese; we thought they were all Chinese.) All at once he caught sight of Jakie and me. We were evidently in the middle of playing a game by ourselves and the fact that the hall had suddenly filled up with a lot of Chinese did not strike us as odd. We were simply using these visitors as vantage points, as trees in a forest behind which we could hide, as natural obstacles impeding our escape. On occasions like this we were anonymous, and we felt invisible.

When it was time to go to bed it was only reluctantly that we left the exciting arena of the grown-ups and went up to our bath, supper, and a story read to us by Nannie. Our prayers were of a traditional kind. It was only later, when we were old enough for a governess, that the more confusing phrases of Mrs. Eddy's text, touching on the mysteries of the metaphysical world, became part of the syllabus. Both the words and their meaning were complicated and well beyond our reach, and their implications were quickly dispelled by the long conversations Jakie and I carried on in the dark, and by the stories we told each other of the imaginary characters we invented—preposterous caricatures of the people we had met downstairs.

At the age of five, or thereabouts, we had set periods in the morning and afternoon for lessons in English and French. As the rides in the pony cart became a thing of the past this still gave us plenty of time to explore the world of Mr. Stainer in the carpenter's shop, Monsieur Gilbert in the kitchen, and Johnnie Camm, the gardener's son, and his activities in the gas-yard which he chose as his retreat. I cannot remember a time at Cliveden, until I was nearly ready to leave Eton, when there was not a tutor or a French governess or the threat of a French governess. French was considered essential, and if we did not have a governess we were sent abroad for part of the holidays to stay with a family in Paris or Nice. The probability of this extra work in the holidays depended on our school reports of the previous term, but as these seldom came up to the expectations which my father set for us the governess, or much worse, the trip to France, usually materialised.

WHEN I had reached the age of seven or eight my father engaged the services of a member of the ground staff at Lords, who came for a fortnight during the Easter holidays to teach us cricket. George Fenner was a fortunate choice of man; he was not only an expert teacher of his art but an original wit, and we always looked forward to his visits. My brother David, more under the influence of Jorrocks than W. G. Grace, owned an odd assortment of beagles which he hunted from his pony in preference, any day, to practising cricket. That was until the unhappy day when my father considered David's school reports so inadequate that the beagles were summarily banished. They were contentious animals at the best of times. They were not house-trained, but it was impossible to keep them out of the house. They gave tongue, as all good beagles should, but only when they were shut up in the kennels for the night. David was always trying to get them to use their noses. I can remember running through the woods, dragging a sack soaked in aniseed, feeling like an escaped convict from Dartmoor with a lot of bloodhounds on his track. The beagles eventually got bored with aniseed, so other more exciting smells had to be found to encourage them. My mother was always receiving presents from America: chocolates, sweets, pecan nuts, and sometimes a Virginia ham. One day the rarest and most cherished of all gifts arrived: roe herrings from the mouth of the James river, pickled and salted and as strong as anchovy to the tongue. David got wind of them the moment

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he came through the dining-room door at breakfast. They were clearly God's gift to beagles who had almost lost their sense of smell. The drag was a roaring success that morning; the scent was blinding, the beagles ran like dogs possessed, chasing they knew not what, but something rare and pungent, and worth going after for once. We came back for lunch flushed and elated, but poor David had a lot to account for before my mother was prepared to find it amusing.

AS FAR as our education went my parents held diametrically opposite views. My father regarded all education as important in principle; not because it stimulated the curiosity into following new lines of thought or increased one's ability to enjoy life, but because, to his mind, it spelt the difference between being serious and being frivolous. An educated man, he would reason, was someone who was in a position to pull his weight; an uneducated man was always at a disadvantage—a precept which was not obvious to a child who had such opportunities for enjoying life provided he could divest it of its various tutors.

My mother's approach was quite different. She enjoyed intelligent people and natural talent wherever she met it, and she often enjoyed drawing out some expert on his particular form of expertise. She saw certain advantages in being educated; but her view was tempered by her contempt for earnest, intellectual people—women in particular—who became so carried away by their knowledge that they ignored what was to her the point of living. The point of life was not to stuff your head with a lot of facts and then think that you knew anything. The point of life was always to be found at the point of contact with people; not with theories, however erudite. Humour was the standard by which she judged the intelligentsia; it was the hall-mark she had to recognise before she was prepared to take them seriously.

After my mother's religious conversion she transferred her patronage of preparatory schools from West Downs at Winchester to a school in Sussex which catered for the children of Christian Scientists. Its headmaster, the reverend Harold Hubert Hibert Hockey, was a Church of England parson who tolerated the unorthodox. The school itself was a bleak place to return to after the comforts of home; but Mr. Hockey, its presiding genius, had an unusual gift with boys. He could teach them anything, except work. We learnt to be good at games, fond of animals, appreciative of music, and our moral standard was impeccable. We had outings on land and outings on water, and we acted nearly all of Gilbert and Sullivan's plays. It was, I am convinced, an excellent school except in one particular; too many of the teaching staff were nearly illiterate. We tussled with Common Entrance and scraped into Eton in bottom place.

ETON was for me a period of almost uninterrupted enjoyment. My mother's visits took the form of nerve-racking interludes which produced moments of acute embarrassment. She never understood this society of young men who were granted more independence and autonomy in their affairs than she ever regarded as being good for children. Their various degrees of manhood, the distinction which they had attained among their fellows, meant nothing to her. In her eyes all schoolboys were children, and she was ready to appropriate any one of them; to seize a boy at random and ask him if he had cleaned his teeth, said his prayers, and written to his parents. My tutor lived in terror of meeting her. Most parents were anathema to A. C. Huson, whose practical experience of life did not extend far beyond the world of young men. My last half, when I was enough of a swell to be in his confidence, he confessed that on one occasion, when he heard my mother's voice approaching down the passage, he had darted into the cupboard in his sitting-room where, for the next five minutes, he crouched, being quietly asphyxiated by the fumes of his pipe.

Eton twenty-five years ago—and it may be the same to-day—provided a unique education for the young man going out into the world. Its society contained all the ingredients

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which go to make up *esprit de corps* in just the right measure. It struck a balance between educating a boy to appreciate the team spirit, while at the same time accepting personal eccentricity as something that was not to be discouraged. If Eton did not give a foretaste of what the world was like outside its own frontiers, it enabled most boys to learn to adapt themselves later to quite unexpected conditions. Contrary to popular belief, it was not a snobbish school. In relation to rival establishments it was sophisticated, even precocious, but the result was broadminded rather than bigoted. Eton spells the end of childhood, and anything further that I write about my mother's life at home will be the judgment of a man reviewing the scene in retrospect rather than of someone trying to recapture the feeling of twenty years ago.

THE English country house and estate has now nearly vanished except as a spectacle for sightseers who to-day view the corpse now that the spirit has left it. It used to be a community made up of many component parts. Cottage and mansion enjoyed a corporate existence which it is difficult to recapture nowadays in the impersonal field of public enterprise.

As there was no village to Cliveden, the club and recreation rooms, which during the first World War had been part of the Canadian War Hospital, became the centre of social life. Outside the main gates, it is true, there stood the Three Feathers public-house, posted as a salutary reminder of the inefficacy of anyone advocating a policy of prohibition. But the club itself was licensed with its own bar and it had the additional attraction of a billiard room, kitchen, and hall, with at one end a small stage and a piano. As well as being in every sense a club for its members, the premises was also the place for teas on Saturdays for the estate cricket and football matches.

Before the second World War, before the habit of the cinema, the sports stadium, the dog-track, and the dirt-track had become quite such an established part of people's lives, the village green and the village lane provided everything that old man or lover, girl or boy, looked forward to when their working week was nearing its end. For Clivedeners in the summer there was Boulter's Lock, where punts, launches, and pleasure-steamers could be stared at, envied, and made the subject of gossip by anyone who chose to stroll down to the river and stand on its banks. For the patient or the philosophical, the river provided fishing of a sort; for the home-lovers, there remained the cottage garden, to be spaded, planted, and trimmed. But for most, young or old, winter or summer, the recreation ground was the centre of attraction. Here the home team every Saturday afternoon defended its honour and reputation, at football and cricket, against its neighbours and rivals. Lee, portly and a little past his prime, used to play cricket when he could get away from his duties at the house. So did Shepherd the woodman, skinny, old, braced, belted, and cloth-capped. Brookie's son, Stanley, young and athletic, a six-or-nothing man with the bat, was immaculately accoutred in white flannels and a blazer; so was my cousin Reggie Winn, certainly the keenest cricketer ever elected to the Eton Ramblers. Hubert Smith, the agent, was distinguished by a hockey blue he had gained at Oxford; but Soper, who learned his round-arm bowling flicking stones against a tree, was accredited with equal athletic distinction in this company. Jakie and I, and sometimes David though he really disliked the game, played for the side.

The recreation room to which I referred was also the meeting place for the whole estate for the annual flower show and sports day on August Bank Holiday. The cricket ground then became the scene of every kind of race and contest, for the very young and the very old. Music was provided by the Maidenhead Brass Band, good all-weather instrumentalists who, if the weather broke, retired to the shelter of the wood and played "Colonel Bogey" muffled by the sound of rain dripping from the trees.

My father usually judged the more impor-

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tant events, and started the tug-of-war between Cliveden and White Place farm, the main event of the day. Holland, the cowman, an enormous, swarthy man with a dark, cheerful face, wrapped one end of the rope round his middle and dug in for White Place. Humphreys, for Cliveden, was anchored on the other end. Everyone who was not pulling joined in to shout encouragement to his own side; and for every member of the team there were at least three self-appointed coaches usually bawling quite contradictory instructions into the ears of friends on the rope. The struggle would veer backwards and forwards, first one way then the other, until one side collapsed and was dragged helplessly along the ground to shouts of advice to "dig in" and "hold 'em"; but the moment had passed for "digging in," and all was cheers and smiles and perspiration.

After tea my mother gave away the prizes, Hubert Smith calling out the names of the winners; the older men shuffling up to receive their presents, touching their forelocks, shaking hands, and receiving a word of congratulation from my parents; the younger ones shyer, more self-conscious, not quite certain what to do with their hands. My mother could let no occasion pass without making a crack of some sort. Emmet, a conscientious man, took great pride in the garden at the back of his cottage, and every year he won a prize for vegetables. "And *now* Mr. Emmet," she would say with some pretence of indignation, "now I *know* why you do no work in my garden." To make the statement patently outrageous she would probably involve my father: "His lordship has had his eye on you for some time." The effect on the audience at first was one of slight shock, and then of mirth. She would appeal to them "Wouldn't you be suspicious? Every year he wins the vegetable prize. It's really become a scandal. Everybody's talking about it." She seldom misjudged her man on these occasions. Her mistakes were more often with strangers, men in public life who could not be broken down into quite unsophisticated terms.

The fancy-dress dance in the recreation room in the winter was for all the adult people on Cliveden and White Place. After dinner the house party, usually consisting mostly of the family and relations at Christmas time, would put in an appearance, the children being allowed to wear fancy dress. This was the one night in the year when Arthur Bushell, my father's valet, allowed himself complete dispensation from his position of under-butler. Arthur was with my father for over thirty years and treated him with reverence and affection. He was a natural mimic; he had a sense of the proprieties and also a sense of burlesque. For the fancy-dress dance, assisted by Rose Harrison, he usually dressed up as Nellie Wallace, wearing a preposterous hat. Lee, who appeared at the dance for a short time in his ordinary clothes, ushered the house staff into the station wagon accompanied by this parody of a woman who, only half an hour earlier, had been quietly serving dinner in the dining-room. My mother and the rest of us would go down to watch the parade and judge the prizes. When Arthur came round in the parade, usually accompanied by Rose dressed as a charlady, the lorgnettes became those, not of Nellie Wallace, but of Lady Desborough, our neighbour at Taplow. For an instant the mouth, the expression, the whole posture gave the caricature. My father occasionally looked rather taken aback at seeing his friend and neighbour brilliantly mimicked by his valet, and to witness a side of Arthur's character of which he was not made aware for the other three hundred and sixty-four days in the year. This particular turn was strictly for the benefit of the family. Arthur ventured to the brink but did not go too far. This was the estate's own party, an occasion for local wits and characters to come into their own, and we did no more than see it started and then disappear.

"But you have said so little about your mother's social life" might be the comment of anyone knowing my mother's life and her reputation as a hostess. "But the whole of her life was a social life," would be my reply. Even when she was alone, and she has been quite often alone in her old age, she

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thought in terms of people. On the rare occasions when she read a book, usually history or biography, she thought of it in terms of people. Sometimes she kept herself alone on purpose, closeted in her room at Sandwich like a monk in his cell; but that was only in order to study her religion, and this was the only non-social function she performed—other than having a bath and going to sleep. If she played golf on her own she would talk to the caddie, ask him about his family and children, and find some way of making him look more cheerful. If she was held up in a traffic-jam she would talk to the policeman. If she was at Buckingham Palace, at a huge reception, she would enjoy herself with the most exalted and the humblest people present; it might be the Queen, but it might equally be the wife of the secretary of some embassy whose country could hardly be found on the map.

During my mother's early period at Cliveden, before politics or Christian Science or children arrived on the scene, before even the first World War altered so radically the order of English society, the guests consisted of the most amusing people that could be found in the fashionable world. There were the great families, and there was also a strong sprinkling of those great wits and talkers who gave the age its particular flavour: Maurice Baring, Hilaire Belloc, A. J. Balfour, Philip Kerr, and many others besides. After the first World War the list at week-ends became even more variegated; in fact it was about as mixed as a list of house guests could reasonably be. Invitations were by merit only; and merit meant being amusing, interesting, influential, American, religious, frivolous, helpful, or in need of help. Invitations were never issued to bores, bounders, braggarts, or people of easy virtue. It was easier for a Roman Catholic priest to enter the front door at Cliveden than it was for the guilty party in a divorce case to get through its main gates—and it was never made easy for a Roman Catholic priest. My mother had a horror of the "fast set"; she found them dull and stupid, and in their company she felt uneasy. The fast set of the 1920's lived in an aura of cocktails and night clubs, racecourses, glossy newspapers, gossip, and divorce courts, and she wished no part of them or their lives. If it came to love-affairs she was a more accomplished flirt than most of them, but she abhorred sex and its uses in seduction. She could manage seduction without it, and that she found more amusing and more satisfactory.

THERE were regular guests as well as the occasional ones. There was Bernard Shaw, who stayed for long stretches at a time, reading, writing, and always talking, eating his vegetables and going for walks. Other regular visitors were Geoffrey Dawson and Lionel Curtis, Tom Jones, Walter Elliot, Terence O'Connor, Bob Brand, and Neville Chamberlain. Perhaps they were the "Cliveden set." It could not have been Lord Ancaster, who talked about grouse and partridges, and spat large mouthfuls of food around the room and kept everyone amused. It could not have been Bobbety Cranborne or Betty Asquith or Aunt Elsie Kerry, or Litvinov or Maisky (who never stayed overnight), or Ribbentrop (who never stayed at all). It could not be most of the people I remember, who stayed because they loved staying, who discussed anything that they found amusing, and who probably felt as hopeless about the political situation as did most people at that time. The week-end parties I remember were heterogeneous in the extreme, with my mother's collection of friends, talents, fellow countrymen, and lame dogs brought together, sometimes by arrangement, at other times almost accidentally.

During the second World War generals came into their own at Cliveden, as they did on other fronts as well. English, Canadian, American generals, admirals, senators, and young airmen from overseas who had nowhere to go for the week-end were invited to stay, often on the spur of the moment. The standard of hospitality which they enjoyed was not marred by the application of teetotal principles. It was only if the family happened to be alone that certain preliminary negotiations between the boudoir and the

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pantry were necessary before the claret could appear on the dining-room table.

I HAVE said nothing about the acting, the most spontaneous and the least co-ordinated acting I have ever seen. The sudden outbursts of mimicry and burlesque could happen at any time. It might be a charade, in which case everyone joined in; but as often as not it all started with my mother slipping a pair of celluloid false teeth into her mouth while in the middle of a conversation at dinner. When this happened her whole personality was transformed, another creature had simply been spirited into the room and now sat in the place that a moment ago she had occupied, a creature bearing a superficial resemblance to Lady Astor but in every other respect a total stranger. If, for instance, my mother decided to turn herself into a Tsarist Russian emigrée then we found that we were talking to a Romanoff or a Troubetskoi whose life had been a chapter of the most appalling disasters. In a quiet monotone, with a tired, detached expression of face, she would recall one episode after another, treating disaster with familiarity and contempt, and making only the trivial sound important. While the mood lasted she lived the characters that she portrayed and interpreted them with the personal vision of the artist.

These characters usually appeared on the slightest pretext in the dining-room when the conversation looked like becoming monotonous and my mother wished to escape from ordinary life conversation and jump into another element. Her sense of artistry gave this imaginative element a touch of reality that more conventional conversation might have lacked. If the mood carried we would move to the long library and, with the adjustment of chairs and tables, give the performance a more theatrical setting. Then we knew we would be treated to other samples of her extensive repertoire. I can remember only a few of them. There was the little Jewish businessman, and in order to do him justice she would hurry upstairs and a few moments later appear again wearing trousers, a tail-coat, and a bowler hat crammed over her ears. This character had no name or any name. He was in business, any sort of business. He was excitable, affectionate, gigglish, a family man devoted to his wife and children; he was confidential, persuasive, but really suffered from terrible anxieties which at times rendered him hysterical. Then there was the horsey English lady who hunted in Leicestershire; the false teeth were enough to do her justice. This character went hard to hounds, swore a bit, and suffered from no anxieties whatsoever. There was also the lady of infinitely good breeding and no brains, conventional and vague, who found Americans common. There was Margot Asquith, straight out of the bottle, by which I mean undiluted in essence, a true reporting from life. And there was the frightened old lady with no teeth in her head, her skin all wrinkled and her hair pulled down over her face, who looked wise and canny and who was deeply suspicious of her neighbours. In the library these characters came to life; sometimes to give a recital of their experiences but usually to carry on conversations with everyone in the room. It was more than a talented performance. My mother knew the whole range of the business instinctively. Turning her back on an audience she could indicate by a walk the lady whose feelings had been slighted but who still retained her pride; or the heroic old body who joined the women's services at the outbreak of war and whose only thoughts were blind patriotism and loyalty to the flag.

The mood was contagious and other voices would join hers once the stage was set. Reggie Winn, her nephew by marriage, while lacking quite her sense of audience reaction, was at any rate an equally wholehearted performer. Jakie, as a ventriloquist's doll or as a retired Indian army colonel, demonstrated that he was clearly a chip off the same block. The *pièce de résistance*, after my mother had retired from the centre of the stage, was my brother Bobbie's version of a parson delivering his sermon. This was, appropriately, left to the last, as being the funniest single turn of the evening and the one most guaranteed to bring down the curtain. With a shout of protest my mother would apply the censor-

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ship, but not before Bobbie's work had been done. Ever since those days sermons from the pulpit have had to be very good indeed before they can banish from my mind the picture I carry of the Very Reverend Robert Gould, his refined, drawn-out, ecclesiastical tones, his anguish, his doubts, and his expressions of faith when addressing himself to the subject of his text: "Is There an After Life on the Moon?" Joyce Grenfell, who often took part in these divertissements, had to wait until she could appear as a professional artist, in front of a public audience, before her talents were given by us at any rate the recognition that was their due.

SINCE I am not trying to hide but rather to reveal my mother's character, perhaps I should refer to her prodigious tactlessness which was the bane of her social life. It was often thoughtless and it was often thought to be heartless, and William Douglas Home (in his memoir) has put it in its kindest perspective. I will merely acknowledge it. It made enemies, and at times embarrassed us all acutely. More disturbing to her family was her overbearing desire to get her own way, and particularly to make the members of her family conform to her pattern of life. She had, or so it seemed to me, some primitive desire to possess her children: her own flesh and blood, she saw them as her own property, as something to which she had an inalienable claim. In this she was, I think, possessed by some uncontrollable force, a fever in the blood which rendered her oblivious to the effect that her words had on other people.

I can also endorse Mrs. Barlow's reference to my mother's occasional appearance of ruthlessness, which was elemental and unpremeditated; and to her disconcerting lack of scruple, which would show itself when her will was challenged over any matter which affected what she regarded as her vital interests. In mitigation of this statement it must be remembered that she was largely untroubled by doubts; these had evaporated in the warm light of Christian Science. This was as long ago as 1916, when she thought she had discovered the Key to the Scriptures and all that may imply, and when she had practically convinced herself that she knew not only what was good for her but what was good for everyone else as well.

Despite this blind side to her nature, my mother was not an insensitive person. Her quick intelligence enabled her to understand many of the varied and subtle forms of life which go to produce a civilised society. And yet, while appreciating the vast differences in background that were to be found even among her own circle of friends, she often chose deliberately to ignore these essential differences. Her imagination encouraged her to see the world as a coherent whole, a drama written by Divine Providence which stipulated that personalities and individual preferences must be overruled unless they coincided with the words of the divinely-inspired text. She was too mixed up with her religion, with her idea of a Supreme Being, ever to disassociate her own performance from that of some central compelling force that gave bountifully of all it had and demanded everything in return. To use another metaphor—and metaphors seem appropriate in treating with a subject which at times may sound as if it were verging on the insane—and discarding Christianity for mythology, her life pattern might have been determined by some fairy who, attending her christening, had endowed her with unusual gifts, but by way of compensation, had pronounced a spell which decreed that, for all her talents, she should never be allowed to conform to the quieter moods of her friends; that she should glimpse, but should never be allowed to share their deeper feelings; and that finally, when her life force slowed down, she should meet old age and loneliness with only courage to sustain her.

In terms of family life my mother's overriding self-will meant that her children, while usually being able to admire the range and extent of her talents, and while responding impulsively to her humour, reserved their deepest feelings of respect and trust for my father, who never protruded himself on to

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the stage but whose sense of responsibility was innate and unvarying.

LIFE is a journey, and I have already spent more than half of mine walking away from my childhood. But if I take one last glance back over my shoulder I see a small figure, a lively, dancing, sparkling figure, happy but sad, real but enigmatic. I believe that figure contained a grain of genius; but where exactly the point of that genius lay is difficult to express. It was not in politics, nor in books, nor in science, nor in the recognised arts. It was certainly not in parenthood, though that may be getting nearer to its source. Was it in humour, in the refutation of dullness in all its dreary forms, in the play of life itself? A smile, a laugh on the face of a child or an old friend, that was its currency; integrity gave it its strength; and courage brought it out into the open so that we might all enjoy it.

Relic

I found this jawbone at the sea's edge:
There, crabs, dogfish, broken by the breakers, or tossed
To flap for half an hour and turn to a crust
Continue the beginning. The deeps are cold:
In that darkness camaraderie does not hold:
Nothing touches but, clutching, devours. And the jaws
Before they are satisfied or their stretched purpose
Slacken, go down jaws; go gnawn bare. Jaws
Eat and are finished and the jawbone comes to the beach:
This is the sea's achievement; with shells,
Vertebrae, claws, carapaces, skulls.

Time in the sea eats its tail, thrives, casts these
Indigestibles, the spars of purposes
That failed far from the surface. None grow rich
In the sea. This curved jawbone did not laugh,
But gripped, gripped and is now a cenotaph.

Ted Hughes

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Herbert Passin

The Ancient Jar of Dahomey

Letter from Black Africa

THE six-mile approach to the University College from Ibadan Town is a quick study in modern Africa. A sprawling expanse of reddish mud-brick and corrugated tin-roofed structures spread over gentle hills, Ibadan is the largest city in Black Africa (somewhat over a half-million inhabitants). Unlike the cosmopolitan coastal cities, which sprang up in response to the European presence, Ibadan is purely indigenous, one of the traditional capitals of the Yoruba people. On its outskirts are the tidy, modern parliament and government buildings of the Western Region. Gracious surburban lawns, barely wrested from the engulfing brush, and the generous houses of higher civil servants give way, as one crosses the race-track, to the bustling disorder of Hausa Town, the "stranger quarter" of the Hausa Muslims from the North. Here we are in the world of Islam: rude mosques, open-air Koranic schools, industrious artisans and merchants, somewhat secluded (although not purdah-ed) women, the dignified white robes of desert peoples, and, behind the scenes, the discipline of sheiks and sub-sheiks. A turn around the traffic rotary and one is back again among the Yoruba and their high-spirited market women, hawking and shouting in blue-costumed confusion. The metalled road leads on through the typical trailing edge of a vast city—small hotels (one shudders at the thought of a night's rest there), cafés, shops, markets—across the railroad tracks into the real African bush of scrub palm jungle and small cultivated fields. Road workers and palm tappers sit under hastily-constructed shelters, keeping out the sun; an occasional drum-beat is heard. Suddenly, on the left, there appears the cattle market, a huge, dusty bowl of reddish earth where the "Cow Fulani," lowly pastoral brothers of the aristocratic conquerors of Northern Nigeria, hawk their monstrous-horned African cattle. Soon we pass the well-trimmed stretch of the tiny Ibadan Airport where in the cool of early evening middle-class African and European families *en voiture* can be seen relaxing and picnicking. On the right a freshly modern gleaming-yellow Shell petrol station, with all the brash exhibitionism of petrol stations everywhere, followed immediately by a small bush settlement—sapling and leaf lean-tos, beaten earth floors, open cauldrons. Women line the road earning their few shillings from the small miscellany of bananas, fried plantains, pineapples, coconuts, cigarettes, matches, sun-glasses. A sharp left turn and one is on the grand double carriageway leading to Carillon Tower, Trenchard Hall, and the Maxwell Fry tropical architecture of University College....

Here for one week some forty leading African figures from thirteen countries, plus a small number of non-Africans, debated the problems of "creating a modern democratic Africa." In Rhodes, we had discussed the problem of strengthening representative institutions in the new States in general; in Ibadan, we tried to apply our discussions to the concrete situation facing West Africa to-day.*

Although the tone of the discussions, influenced perhaps by the peaceful surroundings of the University College, was calm and

* The seminar in Ibadan was sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the University College of Ibadan. (On the Rhodes Seminar, see the article by Edward Shils, "Old Societies, New States," in ENCOUNTER, March, 1959.) "The gathering was notable," said Thomas F. Brady, of the *New York Times*, "because it brought together with the greatest freedom yet seen in Africa, representatives of French and British territories...."

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thoughtful, these were not academics reflecting on events from a distance. Many of the participants were ministers and active politicians; even the academic people were virtually all involved in one or another aspect of "national building" and deeply committed to the political life of their country: trade unionists from Senegal, Niger, Dahomey, and Nigeria; Ministers from Dahomey and Chiefs from Nigeria; active politicians representing opinion in Nigeria, French Togoland, and the Belgian Congo. So the debates, even when they sometimes seemed abstract—as happened when the French-speaking and English-speaking participants struggled to comprehend each other across the great gap of language, education, training, and experience, and of the cumbersome apparatus of successive and simultaneous translation—usually brought something concrete and fresh. French-speaking Africans began, I thought, to understand something of the mentality as well as the problems of the English-speaking. People found that words used in common—like "chiefs" or "African traditions"—sometimes concealed different realities; or conversely, that common realities—like the sturdy, cheerful, ordinary people of Africa—could disappear into the mists of ideological phrase-mongering. Although in the end, the gap between the French and English-speaking Africans was never entirely closed (nor perhaps should it be), both sides seemed somewhat exhilarated by the experience.

Sartre and the Webbs

IT WAS this quality of encounter and discovery that gave excitement to our discussions. But, as in Rhodes, the question that underlay every subject was: How do you build modern States in societies still largely immersed in tradition? To the non-African observer, especially to one acquainted with modern Asia, there would seem to be a wealth of historical experience on this question: Japan since the 1860's; Russia in the 19th and 20th centuries; all of Asia, especially since the recent World War. But, somehow, these never find their way into the African discussions.

The models of historical development, as well as the language and issues of political controversy, it turned out, came from the metropolitan countries. One heard more about the unification of the Welsh, English, and Scots tribes in England ("If they could do it, why cannot we Africans?" asked Henry Cole, a Liberian journalist), the confederation of the thirteen colonies into the United States of America, and even the Swiss Confederacy, than about India's experience in the unification of its diverse peoples, castes, races, tribes, religions, and languages.

What became apparent (and for me this was perhaps the most striking revelation of the seminar) was that the French and English influence went very far beyond language. The modern *élite* in each colonial country has been created by the colonial power, its educational system, its culture, its literature, its politics, and its administrative and governmental institutions. The result is not only a difference in the modern language they use, but a profound difference in styles of thought.

Even more symbolic, however, was something that went practically unnoticed: both the chairman, Mr. Ogunsheye, and the Dahomeyan Minister of Justice, M. Pinto, were from the same tribe, the Yoruba—and yet they were far more separated by their diverse formation and national political experiences than they were united by their common tribal origin. The French-speaking Africans were very elaborate and very French (usually *"progressiste"*; a French journalist remarked that they sounded "like an editorial in *France-Observateur*"). Abstract, eloquent, at times quite subtle, they were full of phrases like "motors of progress," "the present conjuncture," "tempo of development," "maturity of the masses," "the human condition," "the tasks imposed by the new age," etc. By contrast, the English-speaking Africans seemed sober, full of common-sense, and concrete, even when they were Leftist. The difference that suggested itself was between Jean-Paul Sartre and Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

Chieftainship

THE *real differences* in Anglo-French colonial policy have deeply conditioned the realities of African political life. English policy gives the impression of a scheduled plan leading clearly and unmistakably towards "full independence." As a result, the Nigerians seem relaxed and are able to be reflective and concrete about their problems. The haste and overanxiety of earlier days is gone. But the new French policy of a *Communauté* with something less than full sovereignty seems to keep the French West Africans in turmoil. They are not sure that the *Communauté* spells the full independence they want; they are not sure that

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they want the *Communauté*; they are racked by conflicts about regrouping the territories into viable units. Their psychology is still that of the "independence struggle," a phase of development the English-speaking had passed through by 1956–57.

The practical situation is also different. The French, for example, argue that chieftainship is *passé*, and that traditional institutions should be completely replaced or else "neutralised" pending their inevitable disintegration. The Nigerians argue that one has to try to bring the traditional authorities into the modern structure gradually, without radical breaks. To this end, Houses of Chiefs (on the model of the House of Lords) now exist in the West and the North and are about to be introduced into the East, the stronghold of the extreme moderniser "Zik" and his National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). The British policy of "indirect rule" has to some extent supported the power of chiefs; the French policy has tended, except in certain areas, to de-mystify them and reduce their importance. So it was a revelation to the French Africans to discover, on a trip we all made to Ife, that the Nigerians were not speaking in the abstract about "the vitality of chieftainship." The day we arrived in Ife and were greeted by the Oni (King)—himself a very modern man: President of the Western House of Chiefs; friend of Churchill; one-time Minister without Portfolio; and whose very modern library also included a well-thumbed copy of Bertrand de Jouvenel's *Power*—a new chief was to be installed. A traditional ceremony unrolled itself before our eyes, with sub-chiefs lined up in full ceremonial garb. A be-plumed, white-bearded chief was seated on a sort of throne in front of which, like a team of fairy steeds, sat six young girls with powdered and painted faces. Drummers and dancers ranged towards us through the open field before the Oni's durbar hall, and at the climax of the short ceremony, the new chief threw himself on the ground before the Oni (whose full title, Onile Oba Olofin Ajalaiye Adimula, means "Owner of the Land, King, Owner of the House, the Mighty One to Whom One Runs for Safety") in an ecstatic press of drummer and dancers. When I caught the eye of Alexandre Adandé, Dahomeyan Minister of Agriculture (and an anthropologist), who had argued so passionately that the chieftainship was *"passé,"* he shook his head sadly and said to me, *"C'est un vrai musée vivant...."*

Leaking Happiness

Much of our discussion circled around "pre-political" problems. Before you can have modern political struggles, you have to have a modern political and administrative structure. Before you can have an opposition, you have to have a government. And before you can have a government, you have to have a country, a nation. But if this can be taken for granted in mature States, it is not so in Africa today. Present State boundaries have been formed by the accidental administrative requirements of the imperial powers. True, all modern States have, in some way, started by accident and developed through history. But Africa is only at the beginning of this process: the diverse peoples, tribes, and nations living within common administrative borders have very little in the way of tradition, language, culture, or religion to hold them together. At the same time many peoples are divided by present boundaries. The attachment to the new "nation," although it is growing, is largely confined to the educated *élites*. Everybody felt the need for "national unity," but there was always a little uncertainty about what "the nation" was. Even for the "more developed" countries, like independent Ghana or formidable Nigeria, which with its thirty-five million people ranks as the thirteenth largest country in the world (and the largest in Africa), this remains a serious problem. How much more so, then, for a territory like Dahomey! If, as someone pointed out, the Yoruba peoples were to join their more numerous fellows in Nigeria, and the Fons the Ewes, to whom they are related in Togoland and Ghana, tiny Dahomey (with its population of perhaps 1·5 million) would almost disappear. Should a modern, educated Dahomeyan direct his impulse of national loyalty to a geographic area called "Dahomey," or should he direct it elsewhere? So disquieting was this question that at one point a Nigerian felt obliged to reassure the Dahomeyans that Nigeria had no dishonourable, *i.e.*, imperialistic, intentions on her.

It was this underlying uncertainty that conditioned much of the debate about political forms. The analysis of the "rôle of opposition in the new States" (by Professor David Apter, of the University of Chicago) left everyone painfully aware of the overriding need for maximum national unity and minimum obstructionist opposition. But nobody could agree on how this desirable state of affairs could be achieved. One

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remarkable viewpoint was defended by M. Abdoulaye Diallo, the energetic Resident Minister of Guinée in Ghana. (M. Diallo belongs to the Peulhs, a fascinating people of ultimately Semitic origin which is spread throughout the sub-Sahara regions of Africa; in Northern Nigeria, where they are known as Fulani, they form the ruling class of the theocratic Islamic society there.) M. Diallo argued the extreme position for the one-party State (one party; no opposition except within the limits of party "democratic centralism"; party control of the trade unions; government newspapers, etc). "If opposition remains within the party, then you can have real self-criticism! But if the opposition is outside the party, then people will hesitate to be absolutely frank for fear of giving ammunition to the other side! . . ."

Perhaps the most persuasive argument was not the theoretical justification of Kemalism, but a practical one. The *élite* in these countries is so small that a division into government and opposition means a real dispersion of energies.

> We are weary of dispersions and divisions. What we need is to unite this entire generation around a mystique of modernisation. This will demand a total control of all resources. All energies, all talents, must be mobilised for a determined attack on the archaic institutions that impede our progress. An end to sterile disputes between parties!

At the end of this declaration, M. Alexandre Adandé held up dramatically a picture of a jar which he told us was drawn by King Ghezo of Dahomey, famous for his army of Amazons. The jar represented Dahomey. The holes in the jar represented the passages through which happiness could leak out. The happiness of the Dahomeyan people requires all hands to stop up the holes. If a single hole is left unstopped, the happiness of all will drain away. . . .

Debate

At first, this view dominated the atmosphere. Even persons who were extremely reluctant to accept the theory of one-party government spoke defensively in terms of a "political truce" for the early period of independence, of "coalition governments," of "self-restraint" on the part of the opposition, etc. "We may need a period of dictatorship as tutelage for real democracy later," said Mr. F. S. McEwen. (At the same time, his newspaper, the *West African Pilot*, in an editorial attacking Chief Rotimi Williams for "insincerity," noted "the importance of a virile opposition if parliamentary system is to be successfully applied to Nigeria. . . .") But as the debate proceeded (in the plenary sessions, and in the small discussion groups into which we were divided every evening), things began to shift. Arguments by David Soumah of Senegal, the Nigerians Rewane and Razaq, and a few gentle reminders by the Belgian Congolese Lumumba and Adoula, about "the corruptibility of one-party régimes," "the temptations of dictatorship," and the dangers of "a false façade of unity," began to take their toll. A false unity is an invitation to conflict. Conflicts of interest are better openly expressed than suppressed. Minority peoples can only give their loyalty to a new State if they feel they are properly represented and listened to. How else can the errors and excesses of government be checked? There is no reason that the opposition cannot be constructive and co-operate in common tasks. So the arguments rolled on as, gradually, what I can only call a corrosive common-sense began to take hold. M. Pinto complained of the time, so much better spent on his ministerial duties, he had to waste in fighting the opposition, and concluded that opposition is always negative, always destructive. Mr. Razaq, a fellow-Yoruba from Northern Nigeria, dissented. "Why? It *could* be, but it doesn't *have* to be that way. . . ." M. Diallo said, "If we recognise that our aim is the same, there is no need for an opposition!" Mr. Rewane said, "If we recognise that our aim is the same, there is no need to *suppress* an opposition!"

The most dramatic episode in this debate was the head-on clash between M. Diallo and M. Soumah, which went on for days and nights. M. Soumah, who is chairman of the *Confédération Africaine des Travailleurs Croyants* (CATC), is himself a Guinean oppositionist. Since M. Sekou Touré became President, he has refused to return there. Now, M. Touré is not only the President of Guinée, he is also Chairman of the *Union Générale des Travailleurs de l'Afrique Noire* (UGTAN), the CATC's more powerful competitor, which has now established its headquarters in his capital. In Guinée, the UGTAN supports the governmental policy of subordinating the trade unions to the State, a doctrine which is anathema to Soumah. Last May, during the riots in Conakry, which were officially attributed to a Peulh-Soussou "tribal squabble," M. Soumah's house was burned

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down. He was out of the country at the time, and fortunately his family escaped injury; but since that time he has never set foot in Guinea.

The jar of Dahomey reminded me of another symbol: the statuette I had seen in the Kumasi museum. An Ashanti king held an egg in one hand. If he held it too tightly, it would crack; if he held it too loosely it would fall to the ground. This, it seemed to me, was the dilemma of politics in the new States. Government must be strong, but not ruthless; it must be flexible, but not sloppy.

Both sides, to be sure, felt that the other was unrealistic. "All these generalities about representative government, based on European conditions, have nothing to do with African realities." But nobody could agree as to what these "African realities" really are.

All of the French territories are small countries, with populations between one and three million. They have very tiny educated *élites* and practically none of them (except Guinée and the Ivory Coast) are economically viable. Nigeria, on the other hand, is a vast country of thirty-five million, with an enormous diversity of peoples and conditions and exceedingly good economic prospects. To attempt to impose uniformity on Nigeria would be explosive. Furthermore, Nigeria has a much larger educated class and real African middle-class, something which is virtually absent in French West Africa. Therefore the French West African arguments about the "dispersion" of talent that opposition brings about carried less weight. There are enough educated people to begin to find a useful place in the building up of the country outside of politics and outside of administration. In the British West African tradition, the civil service, as in Britain itself, is autonomous and outside politics. In the French West African tradition, the civil servants are politically active. English-speaking Africans were able, almost instinctively, to think in terms of "autonomous" institutions and areas of social life independent of the party in power. For the French Africans it was difficult to conceive of intellectuals who were not entirely *engagés*.

Towards a Usable Past

TRADITION—what is it? What is to be done about it? Reject it? transform it? accept it (critically)? reaffirm it (passionately)? Since the development of modern Africa, like that of all underdeveloped areas, is essentially the transformation of a traditional society into a modern State, tradition is an inescapable term in any proposition about development. Too rapid a break with tradition means "tension"; too slow an emancipation from traditional beliefs and practices, "stagnation."

The analysis by Professor St. Clair Drake, the American Negro Sociologist (now teaching at the University College of Ghana, in place of Dr. Kofi Busia, opposition leader), was a painstaking balance-sheet of the elements of African tradition favouring and impeding modern democratic development. The French Africans, for all their eloquent adherence to *"Négritude,"* were very much less interested in the continuity of tradition and traditional institutions. More willing to break with tradition, they favoured radical reorganisation of local institutions, the complete abolition or "neutralisation" of the chieftaincy, and a more uncompromising turn towards modernity. On the English-speaking side (especially among the Nigerians), there was less oratory about "African Personality" and much more concrete concern for traditional institutions that still have vitality and could be re-moulded and incorporated into modern institutions. I noted that on the French side no one (except M. Diallo) ever wore African dress; on the English-speaking side, African dress was quite common. I was reminded of a luncheon in Paris at which M. Hamani Diori, now Prime Minister of French Niger, argued vigorously against Mr. Ogunsheye: for the *élite* to wear African garb was an "affectation." Both sides agreed, however, with a great wealth of illustrations, that although many traditional institutions had been in the past capable of providing protection for minorities and even of allowing dissident views and interests, they could not as such meet the problems posed by modern conditions. There was the example of the ancient kings of Togo, who always remained hidden from their subjects. "Certainly," M. Amorin said, "it was a good system in its time, but do we really think that is the kind of ruler we need to-day?"

Not to be ashamed of one's past is a precondition for the mental health of an individual; for a people just emerging from the complex humiliations of colonial rule and race prejudice, it is essential. But the step from "not being ashamed" to positive glorification is a decisive one, and constant preoccupation with the past distorts both the perception of reality and the capacity to cope with it. On this issue, M.

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Thomas Diop (of Senegal) provided one of the dramatic interventions of the Ibadan seminar. His face expressive, his gestures compelling, and his voice rich and sincere, M. Diop held us enthralled as he called upon Africans to "be themselves."

> With a foreign personality you can only live a foreign life! In Emerson's words, Insist on Yourself! Never imitate! The only gift you can make is that which is indisputably yours. Africans must search for the unique contribution that they, and they alone, can make to the flow of human history and culture!

His great vision swept over all obstacles. Over the visible fact that the Africans gathered together in the hall represented no single African personality, but were as diverse as their different experiences, national backgrounds, tribal origins, and educational influences. But the call to "self-confidence" touched every heart.

The difficulty arises, however, at the next stage of M. Diop's thesis, "You were great in the past! You will be great again!' I know M. Diop will forgive me for repeating in public an argument we have often had in private. One understands entirely that Africans want to control their own destiny, to free themselves from the feelings of inferiority that have been generated by their contact with European culture, to realise and express themselves, to make their distinctive contribution to world culture. And for this, the myth (or the reality) of "a great past" may be very useful. The search for a usable African past is a reaction against the constant European charge that "Africans have no past," at least none worthy of note, that they have been "savages."

But this assertion of essential human equality, which is entirely defensible and indeed necessary, is different from preoccupation with and its glorification of the past. To say, "The past has been great, *therefore* you are worthy of respect," is, it seems to me, to enter on dangerous ground. What if the past has not been great? Does it follow that a people is therefore *not* worthy of respect? Granting, for the moment, that the Negro peoples of Africa have had a great past, can the same thing be said of, say, the pygmies? Would it follow that since the pygmies do not have "a great past" they are not worthy of respect and of equality of treatment? Or what of the many other isolated primitive peoples tucked away in mountain recesses of Melanesia or the Pacific islands? A great past is largely a question of favourable combinations of historical conditions. Therefore to counter the racist argument about the inherent inferiority of certain races does not require a proof of past achievement. Africans have often sought their origins in ancient Egypt. Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal, in a brilliant if somewhat erratic book, *Nations Nègres et Culture*, has attempted to demonstrate conclusively that West African Negro culture comes ultimately from Egypt. *If* this turns out to be historically correct, then surely the proposition holds: "You have been great in the past, *therefore*...." But this is far from proven. So what if it turns out that West African culture does *not* come from ancient Egypt? It is, it seems to me, extremely dangerous to base the argument for human equality on what may turn out to be an historical error.

And yet this passion for a "past" and for a "great tradition" in order to prove that one is worthy of respect—or to buttress a political position—is irrepressible. The Islamic peoples of the sub-Sahara regions, for example, have in recent years fallen behind the southern coastal peoples who, through contact with Europeans and their schools, have forged ahead in the skills and techniques needed for a modern society. Northern Nigerians often justify themselves with the argument,

> We were great civilised States with a great religion and literature when these southerners were still eating their grandmothers! It won't take us long to catch up!

The best approach, suggested Professor Shils, was to set about the concrete and practical tasks of administration, writing, research, and teaching.

> When you do this, you will discover that, without your even being aware of it, the viable traditions received from the past will play a part. A real, living tradition, will be perpetuated rather than a sterile and debilitating preoccupation with the past.

Federation

WHAT of federation? This discussion was among the most concrete, and the most vivid, of the seminar. The problem arises from a number of factors. First of all, the present boundaries in West Africa were drawn largely on the basis of European administrative convenience. There is still time to reconsider the

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problem rationally, before vested interests in existing boundaries become too rooted. This may be the only way to avoid building explosive issues into the structure of the new State. The administrative units should correspond as closely as possible (so ran Mr. Gorwala's counsel on the basis of the tragic Indian experiences) with "the natural units in which people live, the units within which they can speak a common language and feel a common affinity." Second, many of the small States of Africa are not economically viable; unless they associate with some larger unit they will have difficulties. Large units would mean not only larger internal markets, freer movement of capital and manpower, and more efficient regional planning and resource allocation, but also a larger intellectual public and a larger theatre of stimulation and critical assessment of ideas and experiences. Third, "a country has to be a fair size these days" (as Mr. Ogunsheye argued) to command attention and respect in the world. "Small nations" of one-to-three million people can have little effect. They will even find it hard to maintain the full apparatus of international contact—embassies, consulates, UNO delegations, etc.—that modern States require.

Although all equally paid tribute to ideals of "pan-Africanism" and "African Union," there were notable differences in approach. For French West Africa, federation is a burning practical political issue. With the dissolution of the old colonial federation, the separate territories become in effect semi-autonomous States. Few, if any, are capable of going it alone—although the Ivory Coast wishes to try—and the problem arises of how the small individual States can operate the institutions hitherto supported on a federal scale: universities, hospitals, social services, transport, regional economic planning, etc.... The great political struggles centring around poet Leopold Senghor's Mali Federation, which is proposed as the autonomous successor of the French colonial structure, are still at white heat and will continue to agitate French West Africa for some time.

But the Nigerians were in much less haste. For Nigeria, the first phase of the problem of federation is internal. Nigeria is herself a federation (three regions, a federal centre, and a federated portion of the Cameroons). If the Nigerian Federation "works," as it gives every promise of doing, a good part of Africa is automatically federated—since Nigeria is larger in population than all the rest of West Africa put together.

NEHRU used to say that India had to learn to run before she could walk. Africa has to walk before she has learned to crawl. Africa is at the beginning. The present stage of her problems is bound to be left far beyond in the next few years. The emotions and issues of the independence struggle will turn out to be completely inappropriate to the stage of post-independence consolidation. These in turn will become inappropriate to the later stage of a more developed economy, greater national unity, more education, and more experience with the new institutions. Already these stages of development, if only in rudimentary form, were apparent among the seminar participants: the Belgian Congolese were just moving from an apolitical condition to the independence struggle; the French Africans were still largely caught up in the last stages of the independence struggle; the Nigerians seemed on their way out.

We were meeting, therefore, at the beginning of an historical process. I imagine that our discussion was just such as one might have been able to hear in Japan of the 1860's—or among Asian nationalists at the end of World War I—or even between the Hamiltonians and Jeffersonians in 18th-century America. Many of the arguments must therefore be considered not so much fixed, unalterable positions as a tentative fumbling with ideas in a rapidly changing situation. In a sense, then, that someone speaking from the heart of a bitter independence struggle should advocate a one-party dictatorship is perhaps less important than what he will be thinking and fighting for 10 or 15 years from now.

But only in a sense. The difference between those who say "we need unity, therefore a unified national party with no opposition" and those who say "we need unity, therefore a temporary political truce and a coalition of independent parties"—or between those who say "the trade unions must co-operate with government, therefore they must become organs of government" and those who say "trade unions must co-operate with government, therefore they must voluntarily choose co-operation but yet remain autonomous"—may not seem very great in the early stages. Very often in our discussions people mixed these things up. But they hold great importance for the future. The future of Africa, as of any developing country, will in the end be a product of an intricate dialectic between the ideas of its *élite* and the changing realities with which they are called upon to deal. I came away from Ibadan filled with "African hope."

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Ludwig Wittgenstein

Unphilosophical Notes—By ERICH HELLER

The hell-fire of life consumes only the select among men.
The rest stand in front of it, warming their hands.
FRIEDRICH HEBBEL

WHAT manner of man was Ludwig Wittgenstein? One answer, which is easy to come by, vague, large, and true, is: a man of rarest genius. Of all words that defy definition—which may be, simply, all words—genius is the most defiant. But how else describe a man who was a logician of the first order; a writer of German prose abundant in intellectual passion and disciplined clarity (perhaps only talent is needed for writing such prose in any other language, but certainly genius for writing it in German); an engineer of great promise and some achievement; the architect of a modern mansion; a gifted sculptor; a musician who very probably would have become, had he chosen this career, a remarkable conductor; a hermit capable of enduring for long periods the utmost rigours of mind and loneliness; a rich man who chose poverty; a Cambridge professor who thought and taught but neither lectured nor dined?

He was also an Austrian who conquered British philosophy; but this, as befits Austrian conquests, was due to a misunderstanding. At least he himself believed that it was so. When the pages of the journal *Mind* were filled with variations on his philosophical themes, he praised a certain American detective-story magazine, and wondered how, with the offer of such reading matter, "anyone can read *Mind* with all its impotence and bankruptcy." When his influence at Oxford was at its height, he referred to it as "a philosophical desert" and as "the influenza area." These are ironical exaggerations, but undoubtedly serious as expressions of Wittgenstein's discontent.

Why should he have been so displeased with the rôle his thought played in contemporary philosophical circles? What was the source of his suspicion that a misunderstanding was viciously at work in the proliferation of his views and methods throughout the departments of philosophy? And if it was a misunderstanding, was it avoidable? These questions raise a bigger one: what is the nature of philosophical opinion?

THE *occasion of these notes is the recent appearance of Ludwig Wittgenstein's* THE BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS *(Basil Blackwell, 1958), and Norman Malcolm's* LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN—A MEMOIR, *with a Biographical Sketch by Georg Henrik von Wright (Oxford University Press, 1958).* THE BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS, *illuminatingly prefaced by Mr. Rush Rhees, were dictated by Wittgenstein to some of his pupils at various times between 1933 and 1935. They are indispensable for any study of the intellectual history that led, within the lifetime of the mature generation of Anglo-Saxon philosophers, to a fundamental change in philosophical opinion—a break outwardly less dramatic but probably more significant than that which occurred when Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore banished the very much "post"-Hegelian metaphysics of F. H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet from the academic scene.*

It is the most strange characteristic of the new "revolution" that it was the same man, Ludwig Wittgenstein, who both perfected the "old system" (in the TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS, *finished by 1918, first published in 1921) and initiated its destruction (with* PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, *complete by 1949, posthumously published in 1953). Mr. Malcolm's* MEMOIR, *greatly assisted by Professor von Wright's informative sketch, is a noble biographical document, the more moving by virtue of its simplicity and affectionate restraint. It is from this book that the biographical references of my notes are taken.* E. H.

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THERE are philosophies which, however difficult they may be, it is in principle easy to teach and to learn. Of course, not everyone can teach or learn philosophy—as little as higher mathematics; but the philosophies of certain philosophers have this in common with higher mathematics that they present the simple alternative of being either understood or not understood. It is, in a final analysis, impossible to *mis*understand them. This is true of Aristotle, or St. Thomas Aquinas, or Descartes, or Locke, or Kant. Such philosophies are like mountains: you can climb to their tops or you can give up; or like weights: you can lift them or they defeat you; and in either case you will know what has happened and "where you are." But this is not so with the thought of Plato, or St. Augustine, or Pascal, or Kierkegaard, or Nietzsche. Their philosophies are like human faces on the features of which are inscribed, disquietingly, the destinies of souls; or like cities rich in history. "Do you understand Kant?" is a question like "Have you been to the summit of Mont Blanc?" The answer is *yes* or *no*. "Do you understand Nietzsche?" is like asking "Do you know Rome?" The answer is simple only if you have never been there. The trouble with Wittgenstein's thinking is that it sometimes looks more like Descartes': you believe you can learn it as you learn logic or mathematics. But it almost always is more like Pascal's: you may be quite sure you cannot. For to understand it on its own level is as much a matter of imagination and character as it is one of "thinking." Its temperature is of its essence, in its passion lies its seriousness, the rhythm of its sentences are as telling as is that which they tell, and sometimes it is a semi-colon which marks the frontier between a thought and a triviality. How is this? Are we speaking of an artist or a philosopher? We are speaking of Ludwig Wittgenstein. *"Der Philosoph behandelt eine Frage; wie eine Krankheit."* It is a profound semi-colon, and not even Miss Anscombe's competent work as a translator could save the profundity: "The philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness" is, by comparison, a flat aperçu.

PHILOSOPHY, for Wittgenstein, was not a profession. It was a consuming passion; and not just "a" passion, but the only possible form of his existence. The thought of losing his gift for philosophy made him feel suicidal. He could not but have contempt for philosophers who "did" philosophy and, having done it, thought of other things: of money, publication lists, academic advancements, university intrigues, love-affairs, or the Athenaeum—and thought of these things in a manner which showed even more clearly than the products of their thought that they had philosophised with much less than their whole person. Wittgenstein had no difficulty in detecting in their style of thinking, debating, or writing, the corruption of the divided life, the painless jugglery with words and meanings, the shallow flirtation with depth, and the ear deaf to the command of authenticity. Thinking for him was as much a moral as an intellectual concern. In this lay his affinity with Otto Weininger, for whom he had great respect. The spectacle of the detachability of a thought from a man filled him with loathing and with an anger very much like that with which Rilke in the fourth of the *Duino Elegies* denounced, through the image of the dancer, the cursed non-identity between performer and performance:

> *. . . How gracefully he moves!*
> *And yet he is disguised, a dressed-up philistine,*
> *Who will come home soon, entering through the kitchen.*
> *I cannot bear these masks, half-filled with life.*

Had Wittgenstein ever cared to write about himself, this apparently most "intellectual" of philosophers might have said:

> I have at all times thought with my whole body and my whole life. I do not know what purely intellectual problems are. . . . You know these things by way of thinking, yet your thought is not your experience but the reverberation of the experience of others; as your room trembles when a carriage passes. I am sitting in that carriage, and often am the carriage itself.

This, however, was written by Nietzsche. And it was Nietzsche whom he resembled in many other ways: in his homelessness, his restless wanderings, his perpetual search for the exactly right conditions in which to work, his loneliness, his asceticism, his need for affection and his shyness in giving it, his intellectual extremism which drove thought to the border of insanity, the elasticity of his style and (as we shall see) in one philosophically most important respect. Like Nietzsche then, he knew that philosophical opinion was not merely a matter of logically demonstrable rights or wrongs. This most rigorous logician was convinced that it was above all a matter of authenticity—and thus, in a sense, not at all of negotiable opinions. What assumed with him so often the semblance of intolerable intellectual pride, was the demand, which he made upon himself still more than upon others, for the absolutely authentic utterance. The question was not only "Is this opinion right or wrong?" but also "Is this or that person *entitled* to this or that opinion?" This lent to his manner of debating the tone, at times, of an Old Testament prophetic harshness: he would suddenly be seized by an uncontrollable desire to mete out intellectual punishment. He reacted to errors of

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judgment as if they were sins of the heart, and violently denied opinions, which in themselves—if this distinction were possible—might have been harmless enough or even "correct"; and denied them because they were untrue in the self that uttered them: they lacked the sanction of the moral and intellectual pain suffered on behalf of truth.

WITTGENSTEIN, as Mr. Malcolm remembers, once said, using a comparison with swimming, that "just as one's body has a natural tendency towards the surface and one has to make an exertion to get to the bottom—so it is with thinking." And in talking about the stature of a philosopher, he remarked "that the measure of a man's greatness would be in terms of what his work *cost* him." It is Kantian ethics applied to the realm of thought: true moral goodness was for Kant a victory over natural inclination, the costlier the better. Nietzsche too was, by character and insight, such a Kantian moralist of the intellectual life; yet he, who was never more ingenious than in producing the devastating argument against himself, could also say this:

> The labour involved in climbing a mountain is no measure of its height. But where knowledge is concerned, it is to be different; at least this is what we are told by some who consider themselves initiates: the effort which a truth costs is to decide its value! This crazy morality is founded upon the idea that "truths" are like the installations in a Swedish gymnasium, designed to tire one out—a morality of the mind's athletics and gymnastic displays.

Perhaps it is a pity that Wittgenstein was not the man *also* to say things of this kind. It might have lightened the burden of earnest irritability carried by many a contemporary philosophical debate.

II

THE appreciation of Wittgenstein as a person and thinker (and how misleading is this "and"!) is bedevilled by a persistent optical delusion. The high moral pathos of his life (in which his "legend" has already taken firm roots) *seems* at first glance to be unconnected with the drift and trend, the content and method of his philosophical thought. Every page of Pascal or Kierkegaard or Nietzsche at once conveys, however impersonal may be the subject-matter, a sense of urgent personal involvement. But it is possible for anyone but the most sensitively predisposed to read many pages of Wittgenstein's without suspecting that the ruthless precision and often apparently eccentric virtuosity of this thinking, which has neither models nor parallels in the history of philosophy, is anything but the result of the utmost intellectual detachment. Its first emotional effect upon the reader may well be one of exasperated melancholia—the effect which Robert Musil (not for nothing an Austrian contemporary of Wittgenstein's) ascribes in *The Man Without Qualities* to a certain thinker:

> He had drawn the curtains and worked in the subdued light of his room like an acrobat who, in an only half-illuminated circus tent and before the public is admitted, shows to a select audience of experts his latest break-neck leaps. . . .

Yet Wittgenstein's work is none the less suffused with authentic pathos, and will one day be seen as an integral part in the tragically self-destructive design of European thought.

IF BY some miracle both European history and thought continue, then the future historians of thought will be not a little puzzled by Wittgenstein. For nothing could be less predictable than that a work which more deeply than any other affected contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophy, Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, should have as its motto a sentence from the classical comic playwright of Austria, Nestroy. Or that its philosophical author should have experienced a kind of religious awakening thanks to a performance of *Die Kreuzelschreiber* by Anzengruber, a considerably lesser Austrian dramatist. However, these will be minor surprises, less important, certainly, than Professor von Wright's perspicacious discovery of the affinities between Wittgenstein's manner of thinking and writing and that of the great 18th-century German aphorist Lichtenberg. But of greater weight still would be the realisation that the name of Wittgenstein marks the historical point at which, most unexpectedly, the cool, analytical intellect of British philosophy meets with those passions of mind and imagination which we associate first with Nietzsche and then, in manifold crystallisations, with such Austrians as Otto Weininger, Adolf Loos, Karl Kraus, Franz Kafka, and Robert Musil.

Like Otto Weininger, Wittgenstein believed in the surpassing ethical significance of thinking, and in thought as both a deeply personal and almost religiously supra-personal dedication. With Adolf Loos he shared the radical rejection of all ornamental comforts and decorative relaxations of the mind, and the concentration on the purest lines of the intellectual architecture; with Karl Kraus, the conviction of an inescapable bond between the forms of living, thinking, feeling, and the forms of language (Wittgenstein's dictum, "Ethics and æsthetics are one," may serve as a perfect characterisation of Karl Kraus' artistic *credo*). As far as Kafka and

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Musil are concerned, a comparison between their styles of writing (and therefore modes of perception) and Wittgenstein's would certainly be as fruitful as that between his and Lichtenberg's; and the more revealing because there can be no question of influence beyond the anonymous and peculiarly Austrian dispensations of the *Zeitgeist*, which even suggests that there is a family resemblance between the logical structures, the motives and intentions, of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and those of Schönberg's musical theory—for Schönberg too is guided by the conviction that the "language" of his medium, music, has to be raised to that level of logical necessity which would eliminate all subjective accidents. It is in such a constellation of minds that Wittgenstein is perhaps truly at home, whereas in the history of British philosophy he may merely "hold an important position." This at least is one way of accounting for the discomforts he suffered from the British philosophical climate and on a philosophical scene which so deceptively appeared to be largely of his own making.

WHAT are the motives and intentions of Wittgenstein's philosophy? What is, beyond and above its own philosophical declarations, the historical meaning of that "revolution" which changed the face of Anglo-Saxon philosophy in the course of Wittgenstein's gradual modification and final abandonment of some of the principles laid down in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*? Has it analogies with the revolutionary effects of other philosophies?

In his book, *My Philosophical Development*, Bertrand Russell engages in a bitter attack on the author of *Philosophical Investigations*, a broadside which, if it is not damaging, is yet illuminating.* The man who was one of the first to recognise Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* as a work of philosophical genius (even if he interpreted it too exclusively as the culmination of his own doctrine of "Logical Atomism") says now of the *Philosophical Investigations* that he has not found in it "anything interesting"—"I cannot understand why a whole school finds important wisdom in its pages." He abhors the suggestion, which he believes to be implied in Wittgenstein's later work, "that the world of language can be quite divorced from the world of fact," and suspects that such a view must render philosophical activity trivial ("at best, a slight help to lexicographers, and at worst, an idle tea-table amusement") by insidiously giving to "language an untrammelled freedom which it has never hitherto enjoyed." He disagrees with the disciples of Wittgenstein most radically when they tend to regard "as an outdated folly the desire to understand the world"—as distinct, it would seem, from their own desire to understand the workings of language. If incomprehension can ever be significant, then this can be said of Lord Russell's estimate of *Philosophical Investigations*. For he certainly knew what he attacked when once upon a time he victoriously fought the domineering influence of Bradley's idealism, and also knew what he welcomed when Wittgenstein first sent him the *Tractatus*. But the later Wittgenstein is to him, on his own confession, "completely unintelligible." This might clearly show which of the two recent changes in philosophical outlook—Russell's dislodging of Bradley, or Wittgenstein's superseding of Wittgenstein—is the more profound.

Bertrand Russell was at intellectual ease with Bradley as well as with the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* because both were, like he himself, philosophers thinking *within* the metaphysical tradition of European philosophy. This goes without saying in the case of Bradley. In the case of the *Tractatus* it may sound alarming. But it is true to say that in its own way—and an exceedingly subtle way it is!—the *Tractatus* participates in a pre-Kantian metaphysical faith: that there is, in however small an area of human understanding, a pre-established correspondence between the cognitive faculties of man and the nature of the world. In other words: what man thinks and feels—and therefore *says*—about the world, has a chance of being *metaphysically* true. At a time when philosophers were still on intimate terms with God, this metaphysical faith found its luminously comprehensive dogma: God is no deceiver; He has created the world and planted in man the desire to understand it; He has also endowed him with perception and rationality, which man cannot help taking for the servants of this desire. Could it have been God's intention to frustrate it from the outset by giving man nothing but the *illusion* of understanding? Is the creature made in His own image to be the eternal dupe of the universe? The simple faith that this cannot be lies at the heart of even the most complex philosophical systems which ever since the 17th century have profoundly affected European thought. This faith is discernible behind the scholastic apparatus of Leibniz's Pre-established Harmony and Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum*, those grandiose attempts logically to demonstrate the integral accord between human thought and the true nature of Being. And it is the same faith in reason's power, to "comprehend the wondrous architecture of the world," which inspires the great cosmic discoveries of that age. "Thanks be

* See "Russell and Wittgenstein," in ENCOUNTER, January, pp. 8, 9.

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unto you, my Lord, our Creator, for granting me insight into the beauty of your creation." Thus speaks Kepler in concluding *The Harmony of the Cosmos*.

IT IS a far cry from Descartes to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. Yet there is an angle of vision from which the *Tractatus* looks like a last victory of the traditional metaphysical faith: a Pyrrhic victory.

Compared to the vast dominions that metaphysical thought had claimed in the past for its settlements of truth, there is now hardly more than a little province of "significant" speech in a vast area of silence. But within this catastrophically narrowed space man can still confidently assert some truths about the world, utter words the meaning of which is not imprisoned within themselves, and speak sentences the significance of which is not wholly embedded within the flux of linguistic commerce and convention. No, there are still words and sentences which are true in an absolute sense, reflect "that which is the case," and *picture Reality*. Of course, this ideal correspondence between picture and model, thought and world, language and reality, is not easily attained. Its condition is the observance of the strictest logical rules. Thus it will hardly ever occur in the actuality of human speech. Yet it is realised, nevertheless, in the *essence* of language: indeed, it is its *real meaning*. True, in order to speak "essentially" and "significantly," we must leave much unsaid. But once we respond to the "atomic facts" (the bricks of the intelligible world) with "atomic propositions" or their "truth-functional compounds" (concepts which Wittgenstein, considerably modifying and refining them, took over from Russell), our speech, and therefore our thought, is perfectly attuned to Reality: for "Logic is not a theory but a mirror-reflection of the world." And although Wittgenstein courageously insisted that in proposing this relationship between language and fact he himself broke the law governing meaningful propositions, his *Tractatus* is yet built upon a site salvaged from the metaphysical estate of the Pre-established Harmony. The ground, however, was soon to give; and as it gave, Bertrand Russell (for one) saw nothing but collapse. And it is true that from the *Blue Books* onwards Wittgenstein immersed himself in a philosophical enterprise which, if set up against the traditional hopes of philosophers, looks desperate indeed.

For its intention is to cure philosophers of a sickness the name of which may well be—philosophy. His aphorism of the philosopher's treating questions as if they were patients has more than epigrammatic relevance.

III

THE BREAK between *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations* is of the same kind as that between Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871) and his *Human, All-too-Human* (1879). In both cases it was brought about by the abnegation of metaphysics, the loss of faith in any pre-established correspondence between, on the one hand, the logic of our thought and language, and, on the other, the "logic" of Reality. In the course of those eight years stretching from *The Birth of Tragedy* to *Human, All-too-Human*, Nietzsche came to believe that he had freed himself of this "philosophical prejudice"—which he diagnosed as the prejudice vitiating the whole history of thought—by turning (to use Wittgenstein's obviously autobiographical words from *Investigations*) his "whole examination round. (One might say: the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need.)" Nietzsche could have written this. Indeed, it might serve as an exact description of what he claimed as his great achievement: to have turned through 180° our whole horizon around the point of our "real need" which "needed" another vision, a need radically different from that

> which had been at work in forming the... [traditional] categories of thought; namely, the need not to "recognise" but to subsume, to schematise, and, for the sake of communication and calculation, to manipulate and fabricate similarities and samenesses.... No, this was not the work of a pre-existent "Idea"; it happened under the persuasion of usefulness: it was profitable to coarsen and level down things; for only then were they calculable and comfortable.... Our categories are "truths" only in so far as they make life possible for us: Euclidean space is also such a purposeful "truth."... The inner compulsion not to contradict these "truths," the instinct to reach our kind of useful conclusions is inbred in us, we almost *are* this instinct. But how naïve to take this as proof of a "truth *per se*." Our inability to contradict proves impotence and not "truth."

It was Nietzsche's declared intention not to follow any longer this "instinct" and thus to cure the philosophical sickness of centuries, just as it was Wittgenstein's to "solve the philosophical problems" by recognising their source in "the functioning of our language"—"*in spite* of an instinct to misunderstand it." For Nietzsche the truth about man was that he must live without Truth. This was the "real need." The creature that would satisfy it Nietzsche called Superman —and never mind the offensive word, poetically begotten in a great mind by a Darwinian age. In his letters he often used less grandiose, if not

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less ambitious, words in speaking of his philosophical goal, words to the effect that

> he felt as though he were writing for people who would think in a quite different way, breathe a different air of life from that of present-day men: for people of a different culture. . . .

But this is reported by Professor von Wright as a saying of Wittgenstein's.

IT WOULD, of course, be absurd to represent Wittgenstein as a latter-day Nietzsche, and the comparison is certainly not meant to "manipulate and fabricate similarities and samenesses." The two philosophers could hardly be more different in scope and object, approach and humour, key and tempo of their thought. Yet they have in common something which is of the greatest significance: the creative distrust of *all* those categorical certainties that, as if they were an inherited anatomy, have been allowed to determine the body of traditional thought. Nietzsche and Wittgenstein share the genius for directing doubt into the most unsuspected hiding-places of error and fallacy: namely where, as Wittgenstein puts it, "everything lies open to inspection," where everything is simple and familiar, where, day in day out, man takes things for granted—until suddenly one day just this fact strikes him as the "most striking and most powerful." This may happen on the day when suspicion reaches the notion of "meaning," that is, the idea, held however vaguely, that through some kind of cosmic arrangement, made by God or logic or the spirit of language, a definite meaning had become attached to the world, to life, to facts, or to words. When Nietzsche discovered the "death of God" the universe of meanings collapsed—everything, that is, that was founded upon the transcendent faith, or was leaning against it, or was intertwined with it: in fact, *everything*, as Nietzsche believed; and henceforward everything was in need of revaluation.

With Wittgenstein the decisive change of vision, which occurred between *Tractatus* and *Investigations*, seemed centred upon a more modest event: the vanquishing of the belief in a categorical logic of language, and hence in a categorically harmonious relationship between words and world. But the event behind the event was of the same magnitude. It entailed the same crisis of metaphysical confidence that, with some metaphysically more fanatical Germans and Frenchmen, leads to the great perversion of metaphysics: the lost belief in any rationally reliable dealings with Reality was replaced by the notion that (on the contrary) it was a Pre-established Absurdity which determined the relationship between the intellectual constitution of man and the true constitution of the world. Nietzsche was the first to conceive of such a possibility. After him European art and literature excelled in showing man and world labouring under the tragic or melancholy or grotesque or hilarious compulsion to make nonsense of each other. And there is a historical sense in which the two extremes of contemporary philosophising—Heidegger's tortuous metaphysical probings into language and Wittgenstein's absorption in language-games (and some of the examples he chooses reveal an almost Thurber-like talent for absurd and grotesque inventions)—can be seen as two aspects of the same intention: to track down to their source in language and there to correct the absurdities of the human endeavour to speak the truth. It is an intention which was by no means alien to Nietzsche. Certainly, his universal suspicion did not spare language, and some of his utterances on the subject are almost literally indistinguishable from Wittgenstein's.

Very early in his philosophical life, Nietzsche knew that he "who finds language interesting in itself has a mind different from him who only regards it as a medium of thought," and he left no doubt which of the two he regarded as the more *philosophical* mind: "Language is something all-too-familiar to us; therefore it needs a philosopher to be struck by it." This is Nietzsche's way of saying the same as Wittgenstein when he discovered that "the most important aspects of things are hidden from us by virtue of their simplicity and familiarity." Or when some time later Nietzsche found that "the philosopher is caught in the net of *Language*," he meant much the same as Wittgenstein who, referring to his own *Tractatus*, said: "A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably." Indeed, Nietzsche sounds as if he had in mind the metaphysics of the *Tractatus* when he speaks of the conclusion of a primitive metaphysical peace which once upon a time fixed "what henceforward is to be called truth": "A universally valid and compelling notation of facts is invented and the legislation of language issues into the principal rules for truth"—in the manner, precisely, of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: "To give the essence of proposition means to give the essence of all description, therefore the essence of the world." *But* Nietzsche asks: "Is language the adequate expression for all realities?" And soon he was to be still surer that it was not. On the contrary, the grammatical and syntactical order of language, its subjects, predicates, objects, causal and conditional connections, were "the petrified fallacies of reason" which continued to exercise their "seductive spell" upon our intelligence.

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> Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.

This last aphorism is by Wittgenstein; but it would be impossible to guess where Nietzsche ends and Wittgenstein begins.

IV

ONE of Wittgenstein's aphorisms (unfortunately mistranslated by Miss Anscombe—a rare flaw in her work) runs as follows:

> Philosophy results in the discovery of one or another piece of simple nonsense, and in bruises which the understanding has suffered by bumping its head against the limits of language. They, the bruises, make us see the value of that discovery.*

And in one of the jottings of his late years Nietzsche wrote under the heading FUNDAMENTAL SOLUTION:

> Language is founded upon the most naïve prejudices.... We read contradictions and problems into everything because we *think only* within the forms of language.... *We have to cease to think if we refuse to do it in the prison-house of language*; for we cannot reach further than the doubt which asks whether the limit we see is really a limit.... *All rational thought is interpretation in accordance with a scheme which we cannot throw off.*

Yet neither Nietzsche nor Wittgenstein "ceased to think." In Nietzsche's thought, the persistent misgiving that the established conventions of philosophical language did not cater for our "real" intellectual needs was only one facet of his central thesis: with the death of God, with the silencing of that Word which was at the beginning, *all* certainties of faith, belief, metaphysics, morality, and knowledge had come to an end, and henceforward man was under the terrible compulsion of absolute freedom. His choice was that of either creating, with the surpassing creativity of the Creator, his own world, or of spiritually perishing. For the world *as it is* has neither meaning nor value. Meaning and value must be *given* to it: by God or by man himself. If God is dead and man fails, then nothing in this world has any value and our own language deceives us with all its ancient intimations of higher meanings.

> In the world everything is as it is and happens as it does happen. *In* it there is no value—and if there were, it would be of no value.

These sentences from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* might have been invented by Nietzsche—and many like these were in fact invented by him—when in *The Will to Power*, like an inspired actor, like an initiate, he spoke the mind of European Nihilism which he so urgently desired to overcome.

Wittgenstein's *Investigations* would be as trivial as Bertrand Russell thinks they are, were their infinite intellectual patience not informed with a sense of urgency not altogether unlike that which inspired Nietzsche's prophetic impetuosity. To bring some light into "the darkness of this time"—this was the hesitant hope of the author of *Philosophical Investigations*. This hope, like all true hope, was founded upon the paradox of faith: the faith despite doubt. It was, with Wittgenstein, the faith in language; and language retained for him its all-importance even after it had ceased to be the mirror of Reality. For when all the dangers of language are exposed, when the captivity is shown in which our minds are held by its metaphors, when the witchcraft is denounced with which it assails our intelligence, there still remains the ineradicable trust in its ultimate wisdom and its power to heal our disease.

NOTHING in Wittgenstein's work is more vulnerable to further questioning than this trust; indeed, its very intellectual vulnerability establishes it as his faith. Often he speaks of language with utmost vagueness:

> When philosophers use a word—"knowledge," "being," "object," "I," "proposition," "name"—and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language in which it has its home?"*

One may well ask, who, with language speaking in a hundred tongues through our literatures, dialects, social classes, journals, and newspapers, establishes this "actual use"? Shakespeare? Donne? James Joyce? the *Oxford Dictionary*? the College Porter? the local M.P.? the habitual reader of the *News of the World*? And when Wittgenstein says: "What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday usage," or "When I talk about language... I must speak the language of every day," one cannot help being struck by the homely imprecision of this programme. One wonders why he should not rather wish to bring language back to Lichtenberg's or Gottfried Keller's usage, or to the speech of Karl Kraus,

* And this is one of Karl Kraus' aphorisms on language: "If I cannot get further, this is because I have banged my head against the wall of language. Then, with my head bleeding, I withdraw. And want to go on."

* Was it the vagueness of this which induced the translator to use "language-game" where the German is simply *"Sprache"*?

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which was in fact much closer to Wittgenstein's own than that of a Vienna or London "everyday." Or again, he says:

> Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. . . . It leaves everything as it is.

or

> We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place.

But might we not be "held captive" by a picture "actually used" in language, and can we be sure that "actual usage" will never "bewitch our intelligence"? And if it does, how are we to loosen its grip without "explaining" its nature? (And I am using "explain" here as it is "actually used.")

Or is Schopenhauer, who so indignantly "interfered" with the "actual use" made of language by those who corruptly spoke and printed it every day, guilty of errors of judgment *because* he wrote a prose modelled on the example of a classical literary tradition as remote as can be from the everyday traffic in words?

And what is the "everything" that philosophy "leaves as it is"? Not, surely, the manner of thinking and uttering thoughts. Many philosophers, like all great poets, have deeply affected perception, and therefore language, and therefore have changed our world: Plato, for instance, or Descartes, or Rousseau, or Kant, or Nietzsche, or indeed Wittgenstein.

WHEN Wittgenstein speaks of the language of every day, he does not mean what "actual usage" would suggest he means. In fact, he means Language—something that is of supreme importance as the repository of human community, understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. What he calls "actual usage" and "the language of every day" is hardly more than the uneasy concession made by an absolute faith to the demand for an empirical criterion, or else his manner of disdainfully denouncing the violations of language of which many a philosophiser has been guilty in his pursuit of spurious heights and depths. With two aphorisms of *Investigations* above all, Wittgenstein can be observed in the very act of avoiding, in the manner of an empiricist fighting shy of metaphysics, the open declaration of his all-but-metaphysical belief in language:

> The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of *depth*. They are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language, and their significance is as great as the importance of our language.

How true; and yet how disquieting is the word "misinterpretation"! What does it mean? It seems to suggest that there is, or can be, an absolutely reliable rule for deciding, philosophically or philologically, what is a correct and what is a false interpretation of every particular "form of language." But no such standard can apply to a medium like language, which has no little share in the allusiveness of dance and gesture, the elusiveness of music, the ungrammatical extravagancies of life itself. For no sooner have we left the field of logic, grammar, and syntax, than we have entered the sphere of æsthetics where we no longer wonder whether a writer has "interpreted" words correctly, but rather whether he has used them well or badly; and this will be a matter not of any power to interpret but of something more adequately described as the feeling for language, a feeling which has its ground in sensibility or genius, and has been formed by tradition—that is, by the particular "form of life" within which alone, according to Wittgenstein, language has its meaning.

"To imagine a language," he says, "means to imagine a form of life."

That this is so, is one of Wittgenstein's most striking realisations; and indeed it not only renders the "rules of language," as he well knew, logically unmanageable but also makes their "description," which he hoped for, a task that could not be fulfilled by even a legion of Prousts and Wittgensteins. For what is *the* "form of life" which, in one language, is shared by Goethe and Hitler, or, in another, by Keats and the *Daily Mirror*?

THE word "misinterpretation" in the quoted aphorism conveys yet another suggestion which is even more erroneous; namely, that depth is a by-product of error. But if words like depth and truth and error are to have any meaning at all, then truth is deeper than falsehood. Indeed the suggestion is withdrawn by the aphorism's very form and rhythm which unmistakably intimate that language itself, not merely its misinterpretation, has the character of depth, and that the disquietudes which arise from it are as deep as is the peace which sometimes it may bring: through a great writer and even, rarely, through a philosopher whose thought is deeply rooted in the mystery of words—or, to use the terms of that other aphorism of Wittgenstein: in the ground of language. For this second aphorism comes close to revealing his metaphysical secret.

"What is it that gives to our investigation its importance," he asks there with the voice of an imaginary interlocutor, "since it seems only to destroy everything interesting? (As it were all

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the buildings, leaving behind only bits of stone and rubble.)" And he replies: "What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stand."

The ground of language—it is a transparent metaphor. And what shines through it is a mystical light, even if there is nothing left for it to illumine but a philosophical landscape most thoughtfully cleared of all the fragile and disfiguring edifices built throughout the ages by the victims of linguistic delusion, such as Plato, St. Thomas Aquinas, Spinoza, or Immanuel Kant.

It is an ending a little like that of Goethe's *Tasso* where a man, a poet, with all his certainties shattered, grasps hold of his last possession: language. It has remained an open question of literary interpretation whether that ending spells an ultimately happy consummation or a tragedy. But so far as philosophy is concerned, this enters with Wittgenstein the stage which has been reached in this epoch by many another creative activity of the human mind—by poetry, for instance, or by painting: the stage where every act of creation is inseparable from the critique of its medium, and every work, intensely reflecting upon itself, looks like the embodied doubt of its own possibility. It is a predicament which Nietzsche has uncannily anticipated in a sketch entitled "A Fragment from the History of Posterity." Its subject is "The Last Philosopher." Having lost faith in a communicable world, he is imprisoned within his own self-consciousness. Nothing speaks to him any more—except his own speech; and, deprived of any authority from a divinely ordered universe, it is only about his speech that his speech can speak with a measure of philosophical assurance.

Wittgenstein says in *Philosophical Investigations*: "What is your aim in philosophy?—To show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle." But who asks? Who answers? And who is the fly? It is an unholy trinity; the three are one. This way lies no way out. This way lie only fly-bottles, and more and more fly-bottles.

Song

As the images pull
The fog of distance apart,
Under that steep-browed
Cliff with the echoes calling
    I see the water's light-blue sweep.

The lake is clear and motionless,
In it in depth upon depth
Is reflected the changing cloud,
The swaying pines, the world.
    My heart is like the lake, full.

Throw in a stone, it drops
Through the reflected world,
Out of sight, still falling
To darkness, the water heart.
    My love is like the lake, deep.

Robert Conquest

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THEATRE

Shakespeare for the Three Estates

Letter from New York — By ROBERT BRUSTEIN

ALTHOUGH the summer pestilence, banished with the yellowjack mosquito and the bubonic flea, disappeared long ago from city life, Nature compensates with an annual plague of lunacy, in the grip of which affliction the inhabitants of New York and environs now shudder.

One of the major carriers every year is Robert Moses, the city's septuagenarian Commissioner of Parks, and this summer he introduced a few germs into the theatre—quite gratuitously, since the area is congenitally infected. Usually content to enrage the citizenry by trying to construct a four-lane highway through Washington Square, or a restaurant-parking lot in Central Park, the cantankerous Commissioner got himself involved for a while in a cultural battle, with William Shakespeare as the unlikely centre of the dispute.

To be precise, Moses' quarrel was not with this worthy (for whom he professes a respect almost equal to his love for concrete), but with Joseph Papp, the young producer of the New York Shakespeare Festival. The issue was whether Papp should be permitted to offer free performances of Shakespeare's plays in Central Park. The Festival, it should be noted, has been doing so for the past three years with generally noteworthy results. Performed on a bare stage with a minimum of costumes and scenery, Papp's productions, if not always ideal, have been characterised by a wild *panache*, and the spectators have experienced a Shakespeare both fresh and faithful to the text.

Papp, in fact, has managed to keep his standards high and his budget low without subsidy from the city and without charging admission. The company survived from year to year through his vigorous dunning of wealthy individuals and foundations, and through small voluntary contributions from the audience, many of whom were seeing not only their first Shakespeare but their first play. Perhaps the greatest tribute to Papp's dedication was his success in obtaining concessions from the various theatrical unions—including the Stagehands' Union, an organisation where no such alien element as idealism had ever been able to penetrate before.

This summer, plagued only by conventional problems like budget-raising and the defection of some actors to Broadway, Papp was proceeding with plans for an ambitious season when Moses announced that in order to receive a park permit the Festival would have to charge admission, donating ten per cent of the proceeds to the city. Pressed further, Moses explained that Shakespeare was attracting "undesirable" elements; and the city needed the money to compensate for "soil erosion" caused by thousands of these lumpen feet trampling over the park's greenery.

To agree to these demands would have meant not only the end of free Shakespeare but also the loss of his union concessions. Papp refused, and appealed to the public for support. The response was vigorous. Prominent citizens circulated petitions calling for Moses' resignation; five committees chanted in unison *"We Want Will!"*; poetasters produced volumes of bad verse (*"his heart indeed is hard/Who would deprive us of the park-borne Bard!"*); and drama reporters put aside their usual meekness to rant in scorching prose against Philistinism....

On Moses' side, two tabloids agreed that free Shakespeare was probably subversive of profit-making enterprises. One editorial charged that the Festival was merely subsidised competition for tax-paying entertainments, another that New York theatre was healthy because spectators paid money for plays. The sinister implications of Papp's venture were made more explicit when Moses began circulating an anonymous letter recalling that Papp, appearing before a Congressional committee, had taken the Fifth Amendment on his past political affiliations. A casual revelation that Papp's real name was Joseph Papirofsky made the association between free Shakespeare and foreign ideologies even more suggestive. And just about this time, possibly by

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coincidence, some mid-western educators asked that Shakespeare be omitted from high school curricula because his works, written during a monarchy, reflected a "totalitarian tendency."

After Mayor Wagner—who generally prefers to remain aloof from all controversies except elections—had failed to soften the flinty Commissioner, Moses dismissed further argument by announcing a summer season of light entertainment in Wollman Skating Rink (also in Central Park) with admissions of one-to-five dollars. Papp, however, daunted neither by this nor by an unfavourable decision from the State Supreme Court, now appealed to the New York Appellate Division on the grounds that Moses had scuttled the Festival to clear away competition from a profit-making enterprise. In a decision which ordered that Moses issue Papp a permit forthwith, the Appellate Division confirmed everyone's opinion that Moses' behaviour was "clearly arbitrary, capricious, and unreasonable." Beginning to smell defeat, Moses made a half-hearted suggestion that Papp provide the city with $20,000 to keep the park area "safe and controllable" for temporary use; but when Papp balked Moses begged the money from the City Council.

The thumping irony of seeing Moses now among the most ardent supporters of the Festival was prevented by two private foundations who donated the money before the Council could act. Papp went about preparing his season. Since the summer was half over, the programme consisted of only one play, a brilliant performance of *Julius Caesar*. As for Moses, battle-scarred, weary, and the object of city-wide scorn, he has retreated to the area of more familiar lunacies. With a Citizens' Committee negotiating to insure for the Festival a permanent home in the park, the free Shakespeare he fought so hard to subvert now has a fair chance of becoming as old an institution as himself.

WHILE Shakespeare in the Park is hamstrung by New York officialdom, Shakespeare in the Suburbs flourishes. At the American Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Connecticut, the secret ingredient is money. Wealth drenches the atmosphere. One feels it everywhere —in the sumptuousness of the productions, in the pockets of the audience, in the exclusive homes and clubs which surround the theatre. Clearly, the Stratford Festival makes for the halls of art and tradition through the side-doors of opulence and fashion.

Like Broadway, of which it is merely an extended arm, Stratford combines an awesome reverence for profit with a cloying sentimentality about culture. In the plush lobby, portraits of Ben Jonson and Elizabethan ladies hang side by side with busts of Maurice Evans and Katherine Hepburn; plates and mugs bearing Shakespeare's image are sold over the counter with root beer and pepsi cola; a silver scroll dedicated to Stratford's founder, the Theatre Guild's Lawrence Langner ("whose vision, persistence, and faith," etc., etc.) decorates a conspicuous corner; and a booklet solemnly called "The Birth of a Theatre" is peddled during intermission. The town has broken out in a rash of *"ye olde"* inns, and gasoline attendants wearing doublets and hose fill the tank of your car. Still only in its fifth season, the American Stratford envisions itself a national institution before it can boast of a single artistic achievement.

Without some radical transformation, the achievements, I should guess, will be a long time in coming, for Stratford has settled comfortably into a suburbanite corner from which it dispenses exurbanite pabulum. Even the theatrical images are tailored for the audience; on the Stratford stage, as in the suburbs, people look happy only in crowds (on twosomes vacuity settles), children appear everywhere, noise substitutes for energy and emotion, and an outer bustle conceals an inner chaos. The physical stage, a modified proscenium with an extended apron, looks like a beach cabana or a suburban ranch house, with Venetian slats around the walls to provide "space for modern living." Actors are forced to make their escape down steps in the fore-stage, as if retreating to a rumpus room with ping-pong tables and do-it-yourself work-benches; and on-stage a more precarious set of stairs leads to what might be an expansion attic. With the whole contraption less a playing-area than a model-home, the actors only intermittently convince you they are appearing in Shakespeare. Most of the time, they are occupied with showing the architect's handy gadgets to the 1,550 visitors who have come to see their house.

For here the designers and directors battle for attention while the author and actors watch from a distance. The stage is dominated by machines and it is in constant motion. Titania's bower is wheeled back and forth; the Capulets' ball is laterally trolleyed onstage while the actors dance on the moving parts; Herne's oak spreads its branches as if stretching in full sight of the oohing audience; and an elaborate series of inner drapes leap up and down to make way for new surprises from the wings. Competing with the roar of the machines and the cacophonous music played from under the stage, the actors struggle to project; but even when other noises are stilled Pluto's raucous voice still manages to drown all cries. The costumes (costing, I am told, $64,000 for *Romeo and Juliet* alone) are of such richness that they seem to lead a life of their own, and beside such conspicuous consumption the pale

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and subtle shades of the human face fade into insignificance.

Some of the acting company are suffering a good deal from this; they are a lot better than the battery of directors, designers, and costumers have permitted them to demonstrate. A small nucleus of performers, mostly imported from outlying classical repertories like Antioch, Wellesley, and Barter, are developing an intelligent native approach to Shakespeare, neither excessively Anglicised nor colloquially American. But when they are not miscast (as they frequently are—the directors' genius for this is astonishing), they are inhibited by the heterogeneous acting techniques of the others. The company, recruited from a number of disparate theatrical traditions (the Mercury, Group, Civic Repertory, Canadian Festival, and even the Actors' Studio are represented), is marked at present by glaring inconsistencies of style. Nancy Wickwire and Nan Marchand play their parts with force and coherence, and some of the clowns are remarkably funny; but Richard Waring (who learned his Shakespeare from Le Gallienne) turns Oberon into a vocal, melodramatic, and *bravura* stomper; William Smithers (trained at the Studio) transforms the extrovert Mercutio into a tortured introvert; and Will Geer (whose most famous rôle was Jeeter Lester in *Tobacco Road*) makes a lusty roaring Yankee farmer out of the quakingly ancient Justice Shallow. Perhaps because they are so busy dodging the machines, the actors have not been able to listen to each other enough to form an ensemble, and each play emerges as a dialogue between past, present, and future man.

The fault for this gallimaufry lies, I think, with John Houseman and Jack Landau, who for too long have been sharing the directorial chores between them. Manufacturing a chic, shiny, chromium Shakespeare, they neglect the play and the performance for the external display. Stratford's trademark is that modern miracle of dramatic obfuscation, the "production scheme," in which the play is jollied up with special attention-getting mechanisms. In past years, this took the form of dressing Shakespeare in modern clothes. (Our disrespect for history is nowhere more apparent than in these updating techniques.) But presently Stratford leans to overinterpretation. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, not only the clowns but also the lovers, fairies, and courtiers are vaudeville comedians (a pint-sized Theseus bandies words with a muscular Hippolyta who talks like Mae West). In *Romeo and Juliet*, the heroine, a foot-stamping, petulant child, weeps mascara tears over her oafish lover, a clumsy swain newly come out of the country. Almost every line is detoured with new business; "production values" bury the meaning of the play under a ton of gimmicks. The irony of all this, of course, is that if Shakespeare had any consistent theme it was that man could not reach full humanity until he junked appearances for the reality underneath, until he glimpsed "the thing itself." The thing is very much hidden at Stratford. The suburbanites are given their own vision back—outsides, outsides, outsides.

Stratford is a dream gone bad. Turned into a good citizen, Shakespeare is losing his identity in that theatre-wise "team" of directors, designers, and technicians who now exploit him. In this, he shares the fate of the Broadway playwright, proving that the cynical monster of commerce is no respecter of reputation or years.

In Massachusetts, Shakespeare suffers much the same handling, but if the Stratford Festival designs its productions for suburban consumption, the new Cambridge Drama Festival seasons its Shakespeare for the tastes of the *haut monde*.

In Boston, where genuflection before Culture is almost as much a social imperative as Sunday morning gestures towards God, some perfervid souls have brought a new "arts centre" into being. Fired by the same religious zeal, the State legislature is even financing the venture. The opening of *Twelfth Night*, the Festival's first production, was recently the occasion for many of these notables—politicians, socialites, movie stars, Harvard poets, and other official monuments—to gather together in evening dress and salute their achievement. It was a gala affair, complete with speeches, television cameras, gold tickets, and fireworks. Before the dedication (read by the Governor somewhat appropriately into a dead microphone), four local citizens dressed as Beefeaters blew into long trumpets. A brass band played Sousa marches, a deafening cannon went off, and the Festival flag was raised.

The theatre, still uncompleted on opening night, is an elaborate circular structure with canvas walls and a nylon elliptical-shaped roof which sits on stilts. Surrounded on one side by a moat-like trench and on the other by the Charles River (from which coign of vantage seafaring patrons are invited to approach it), it gives the impression of an abandoned flying saucer dedicated to the use of Thespis. The stage, like that of Stratford, Ontario (after which it is apparently fashioned), is a large apron hemmed in on three sides by spectators. For this production, it is painted blue; blue is the colour of most of the costumes; and 170 lighting instruments occasionally turn the action blue as well—dark blue during the singing of "Come Away,

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Death." Equipped with an upper stage, curtainless, and featuring entrances through the audience, the Festival's stage should be the delight of New York reviewers Walter Kerr and Brooks Atkinson who (along with Thornton Wilder) have gotten it in their heads that the low estate of American theatre can be directly attributed to the picture-frame set.

The current productions demonstrate that the difficulty lies a good deal deeper than form or stagecraft. Billed as a "music and dance extravaganza" and embodying a huge number of interpolated songs and hastily improvised dances, the Cambridge *Twelfth Night* falls ponderously and pretentiously between Shakespeare and *Kiss Me Kate*. Here Shakespeare has not only been jollied up; he has been transformed into a grinning idiot. Feste prances about with two brand new *doppelgänger* (a singer and a dancer), and most of the dialogue has been cut to allow these three "zanies" time to improvise five or six enormously unfunny pantomimes (one of them having to do with blowing into toy instruments and reading music off a broken stand). For the sophisticates, there is a touch of abnormal psychology: Orsini fondles Caesario (Viola disguised as a boy) in a manner calculated to raise the hackles on the most enthusiastic devotee of Tennessee Williams. There is something for *voyeurs*: Sebastian, mistaken by Olivia for Viola, beds her *before* her proposal of marriage during a break in the action while someone, peeking through a keyhole, sings "Don't push my tender passion." And finally, there is even accommodation for those who hate to see summer entertainments marred by a single dark note: Malvolio is married off at the end of the play, fully adjusted to the group, and brought back smiling to sing (in unison with the others) "The wind and the rain," probably as a tribute to everyone's togetherness.

The real paradox of all this is that some of the best artists in American theatre are implicated. Included in the cast are Siobhan McKenna, Fritz Weaver, Alvin Epstein, and Russell Oberlin, but with the exception of a mischievous, scatter-brained Maria from Tammy Grimes, there is not a clean performance in the lot. McKenna's Viola is a hoarse-voiced, heavy-footed Irish peasant girl who pounces on one word in each verse line as if she meant to devour it; Weaver's Malvolio, an upstart played more nobly than the nobles he imitates, is a frustrated, neurotic soul, violent in movement and uncomically eccentric in behaviour; and Epstein, Oberlin, and Geoffrey Holder, generally highly professional in their respective accomplishments (movement, song, and dance) are made to look uncommonly gauche.

Furthermore, the director, Herbert Berghof who has hitherto brought great distinction to the plays he has interpreted, has here collapsed completely. One could forgive the elephantine quality of the staging (though it comes as a surprise after the audacious movement in his *Waiting for Godot*), but how does one account for the constant directorial intrusions?—during the letter scene, characters blow noisemakers instead of speaking, squirt water pistols at Malvolio, and generally behave like morons at a New Year's party. Everyone seems as if they had been rehearsed in different parts of the country and brought together for the first time on opening night. We are confronted here with an artist of integrity reduced to pleasing, and not even knowing how.

The Cambridge Drama Festival, with performances of *Macbeth* and a Gielgud *Much Ado* still to come, is one of the great social events of the summer, for this is an audience more involved with social than æsthetic experiences. Brought back to their chairs with great difficulty after each intermission and obviously more interested in their neighbours than the stage, this audience (nevertheless) huzzaed and bravoed vigorously. Since what they had seen was not even a passable performance, one is entitled to speculate on what they were applauding. Perhaps—in their black ties and colourful dinner jackets, in their trailing gowns and diamond tiaras, in their satisfaction at having fulfilled their debt to Culture in the least painful way—perhaps they were simply applauding themselves.

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Rock Paintings, Drakensberg Mts.

These mountains of up-pointed spears
Hold eland, oribi and rhebok
Capering over yellow rock
In sandstone caves that form a barrier

Eastward mauve and vertical,
Westward greenly gradual.
Sweet grasses swish below like silk
Torn at dark by prowling buck.

Baboons on red and scrabbling paths
Scatter dust in layers of talc,
Imitating as they stalk
Human gestures, defiant oaths

—A form of sympathetic magic
More goodnatured now than tragic,
Though practised by the bushman hunter,
Re-creating as a painter

Animals he hoped to capture,
Art was not a surplus rapture,
But a means of softening up
Hartebeeste and antelope.

Here walls of cave and sky converge,
Illustrating primal urges
Bush-pigs scuttle from cracked rocks,
Bush-girls thrust their weighted buttocks

Squatting as they chant in line
Round pots of boiling porcupine.
The painted bushman aims his bow,
The real sunset starts to flow

Across this sweeping mountain range
And still, despite ten centuries' change,
Art remains a kind of hunt
Eliminating fear and cant,

A means of pinning down
An object, by the sheer act
Of drawing animal or loved one,
Making absence into fact.

Alan Ross

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Romantics in London

THE Council of Europe is the council of a great deal of a continent beyond, so far as it goes, the individual interests of its national members. If it is political and economic, it says first of all a few words to itself and to us about a civilisation common to Europe. It assumes a "common heritage." The phrase, I know, is old washing out to hang. Yet on the side, by some sense or vision or by way of a tribute at any rate to virtue, the Council in obedience to this assumption does do an unusual thing when it sponsors exhibitions of European art—of those greater movements which have surged through Europe in the centuries.

You can take the latest (the fifth) of these giant affairs, which displays Romanticism (in London, which is its proper city), in two ways: in a Council spirit of "common heritage," and for itself, politically, historically, sentimentally—and pictorially. Either way stirs a certain scepticism or discomfort, at any rate a certain irony.

Of course, if a civilisation is—exactly what?—is a culture in which the humans of an area acknowledge a systematic regulation of life, broadly similar, broadly harmonising with their religion, then in Europe we have had something of a common civilisation; of which art cannot help being an expression. A plotting of Christian art of the Western varieties in any phase from Romanesque to the revivals would answer the question in the same way. Go outwards from centres of *l'Europe aux anciens parapets* to the fringes, or even into the America of unrooted Europeans who are not (altogether) re-rooted Americans, and what a game it is to discover in church or chapel the crudest of decorations, in a remote Welsh valley, a remoter dale in Iceland, a remotest town (speaking from Europe) in Connecticut or Colorado, element after element, however transformed, which connects these crudities to the mature sophistications of an Ely or a Wies. A moulding is enough to insist, after all, that Europe was a cultural fact.

As a Councillor of Europe, congratulating yourself on an exhibition which marks the tenth anniversary of the Council, you could walk around the Tate, pause first of all in the pre-romantic antechamber in front of the leaves, the rocks, the illuminated air, the sun-reflecting sea, and the azured hills of a Claude (*Perseus, or the Origin of Coral*), then proceed by the moods of melancholy, joy, ecstasy, enthusiasm, innocence, primitivism, pantheistical nature-worship, self-sufficiency, self-determination, heroism, revolution, liberty, disaster, defiance, terror, self-indulgence, and morbidity, to a conclusion, galleries ahead, in front of the static pseudo-pathos of Delacroix's *Massacre at Chios*; and between the Claude and the Delacroix you could say that you had been examining art evidences of a great European movement. But movement does not necessarily imply direction or unity; and here the discomfort comes in. Isn't the movement the greatest, deepest, and most disturbing one, despite itself, of disunion? A great unity of disunion and division?

Both historically and art-historically the text to write up on the walls would be less a *Hail Europe* than a confession that here, with romanticism, good links as well as bad links of a Europeanism began to dissolve. In a search for truth about mankind (*what is my real nation?*), national identities hardened. In a search for true individual essence of man, art began to desert the concerns of mankind.

GOING MYSELF AROUND the paintings at the Tate, and the drawings at the Arts Council, I have experienced again what I shall call the active passivity of the Romantic time between 1750 and 1850, a mixture which seems to unite all the moods, passions, sentiments, indulgent acts, and rarer insights displayed in this huge exhibition. "What is the truth?" seems the under-question asked by romantic artists or poets; who then declare that only the experience of the naked and passive self can give the answer. The wind blows, the self feels the wind. But the passive and naked self once acted upon, once convinced (queerly at times) of the truth, becomes active in a reckless announcement of the discovery, in whatever is the artist's medium. And if a sense of "the truth" vanishes, the artist either collapses or is feverishly and sometimes falsely active in his attempts to find it again.

Of course not every artist between 1750 and 1850 is so audible, so absolute in his self-question; is so resolute in his passivity or activity. Every movement (as the Tate exhibition shows), every surge or shift in values, every whirlpool or agitation, prescribes in spite of itself a series of manners or mannerisms. Attitudes are struck, responses are faked. The same artist is at times logically honest, at times subservient. A movement creates sooner or later, large or small, its own market, whether in rewards of money or rewards of esteem or even self-esteem (*I too am a romantic, and would be buried on a mountain top, under the moonlight, in a crystal coffin*).

Yet passivity-activity seems to me the base, arising out of the scientific and philosophical scepticism of the 17th century. *What is God?*

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What is man? What am I? What am I in relation to God? Is God my invention? What is man's natural state? What is nature? What is light, which reveals all things?

After the antechamber at the Tate with its Claude and its Gaspar Poussin (*Landscape with a Quiet River*), and its *Storm off the Dutch Coast*, by Ruisdael, so quietly and calmly foreruning the unquiet storms of romanticism, the first room does establish an unquestionable standard of exhilaration, but one which neither a movement nor an exhibition could maintain. It is the room of Light.

The God of Genesis, interpreted and intensified by Milton, one of the appointed forbears of English romanticism, establishes an ineffability of light, actual and spiritual; and Newton then explains actual light and explicates it into the no less creative colours. Very well. The romantic artist passively accepts light and colours, actively elaborates them on canvas. In the first room there are rainbow landscapes and studies by Constable, by Turner, by Caspar David Friedrich. I think, if I had had the arranging of the pictures, that I should have left the dilution of moonlight altogether out of this room (since the moon belongs rather to the quietist questions and quietist answers of romanticism). I should have stuck entirely to the fierceness of the sun, rising, in full blaze, and going down and splitting into colour, as it does in one large, and one small masterpiece in the room—in Turner's late sunrise of *Norham Castle* and the small *Lake at Sunset* by his follower Francis Danby, in which chrome and green and blue shimmer into the sky and across the lake, while the hills change to violet. And light being fire, here as well (splendid phoenix from Cleveland, Ohio) is another of the greater Turners, *The Burning of the Houses of Parliament*. The Houses burn, or rather flames of yellow and of red swirl through the sky from the point of combustion, and swirl across the reflecting surface of the Thames, in a driving and rolling of pigment. Old Order, New Order; Nature, Sentiment. Such pairs are visible again and again, and may be mentioned apropos this Turner and yet another picture in this first room. Parliament was burnt soon after the Reform Act. If Turner's had been a less elemental romanticism—water, air, reflection, gleam, fire, storm, etc.—an Old Order of government would have burned more symbolically and sententiously across the Thames and with less surge of suspended and reflected fury. If Caspar David Friedrich (Turner's contemporary) had been less nature-inquisitive, the more obviously symbolic yet still pictorial situation of his *Mondaufgang am Meer*, on the opposite wall (in which two women and a man, backs to the world outside the picture, sit on the rocks and watch the setting of the moon towards an horizon of violet clouds and the sailing of two ships), would have left the spectator surfeited or nauseated, or bludgeoned with that "nimiety" which Coleridge found in the German mind.

After light, the exhilaration declines a little. Romanticism exists most vividly in a tension between the questions about man or man and God, and the questions about nature, a tension between the scrutiny of self (which leads to infinity and inflation) and the scrutiny of nature (which leads to excess of exactitude and "natural truth"). The tension weakens. The struggle (as with Constable) is often too restless, the statement or answer is often too grandiose (as in James Ward's *Gordale Scar*, a great picture nevertheless, which is now clearly seen as a tour de force of all romanticism). Too brashly a trap is baited for significance, or secrets, and again and again I have found myself reminded of three lines by Yeats, *Three Movements*, in which romanticism is the middle circumstance:

> *Shakespearean fish swam the sea, far away from land;*
> *Romantic fish swam in nets coming to the hand;*
> *What are all those fish that lie gasping on the strand?*

"What is the truth" is the net; romantic fish are coaxed to the hand in answer, coaxed not only in the sharp, rather too smooth and too hard symbolisms of Friedrich (who appears less a splendour of romanticism than one had hoped) or in vapid medieval clarities by the Nazarenes or in glory paintings by the French, but in far too many other paintings (and poems) capturing, or rather confining still in the sea but also within the net, the thrill (a word enjoyed by nature poets of the 18th century) or the mystery of states of being or sensations, as if mystery and thrill were themselves the explanation. And the mysteries swim up and take food from the hand. *Shakespearean fish swam the sea far away from land*. So did the fish of Rembrandt.

Out of romantic painting, at least for myself, I choose those rarer, calmer statements, which at times came from an inveterate fisherman, yet in a moment when he transcended pantheism, or any other pseudo-explanation, or any question; statements in which the fish are not ostentatiously fed. In this exhibition the moments occur in Turner, in *The Evening Star*, in Crome, most uneven of painters, in the calm horizontals of *The Slate Quarry*, in Blake's *Adam Naming the Beasts*, in the *Solitude, Morning Twilight*, in which Fuseli sets a sleeping shepherd out of *Lycidas*, in Toepffer's *View of Mont Blanc* (Toepffer in alpine Switzerland

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crystallising the Alps, Ward in mountainless England enormously exaggerating his limestone gorge), or in the pictorial theorem of *The Playground* by J.-L. Agasse. Not the greatest, not the most magnificent paintings either of romanticism or the exhibition; but at any rate some of the exhibits not dominated and lopsided by subject, and not yet dominated by means. And I should extend the praise of that particular balance to much more in the exhibition by Turner—to the *Norham Castle*, withdrawn from volume into light, to the *Shipwreck*, in which destruction is not too dominant, and to that unacknowledged masterpiece by him of a *Skeleton on a Horse*, where mystery or symbol is manifested in pigment, not merely delimited or described by it. But then Turner, all subtractions made, does emerge as the prince of romanticism.

TURNER, AND NOT Delacroix. Nothing is more ridiculous among extensions of the principle of *la gloire* into the facts of European art than the French concept of romanticism as a "discovery," even a triumph, of French painters. Romanticism came late and altered and jaded to France, partly because of war, partly and relatedly because some of its possibilities were overlaid by so much of *la gloire* stirred Napoleonically into the excellence of David (romantically and fundamentally he would have been better shown in this exhibition by his *Self-portrait* from the Louvre than by his *Napoleon Crossing the St. Bernard*). When it was allowed to reveal itself with less hindrance in France, romanticism at once was blurred by a too clear formulation and separation of ideas, which were then placed in opposition. If nature in romanticism is misunderstood (it generally is), Corot, as a result, is not regarded as an excellent and sober issue of romantic naturalism (which he was). The French excellence certainly does not reside in the mob of romantic costumiers and orientalists; nor in Delacroix, whose paintings, as one saw in a recent exhibition in Venice and as one sees again at the Tate, grow dingier with the years, because among other defects, he rejected subject for means while leaving subject in place, in possession, in the frame, as an intact emptiness. After Delacroix (and after Constable, in whom there was a parallel unbalance), Courbet was required.

If you doubt this, and prefer to stick to estimates accepted and fossilised, take your opportunity at the Tate and compare Delacroix's *Massacre at Chios*, so famous, so cold, so static, so very sub-Byronic, so indifferent to its theme of "a Greek family awaiting death or slavery," a limited triumph of paint and colour transitions, with Claude's *Perseus*, with which the exhibition begins; in which means and the disturbed subject-matter are in accord; or (though you may well argue that he transcends any romantic label) compare it with the *Chess Players* and the *Refugees* of Daumier. Alongside the *Massacre*, François Rude's plaster head of *Liberty* opens its mouth in a most unsurprising yawn.

As a footnote, since romanticism is more northern than French or than German (as it seems, after all) I would beg that certain items little praised and from quarters unfamiliar to us are not overlooked—at the Tate, Elias Martin's *Romantic Landscape with a Spruce* (from Sweden); in the Arts Council Gallery, the drawings (also from Sweden) by the proud Sergel whose bronzes survey the sea-waters of Stockholm, and the strange Carl August Ehrensvärd, and (from Denmark) the Ossianic drawings by Abildgaard—drawings by three artists who lessen the apparent isolation of Fuseli.

Geoffrey Grigson

Dissenting Opinions

On the American Left — By DANIEL BELL

DISSENT is one of the few cultural periodicals in the United States avowedly socialist in politics and radical in its criticism of contemporary culture. It is, like *Universities and Left Review* in England and *Arguments* in France, at odds with the doctrinaire interpretation of orthodox Marxism, and at one with the widening search for a new basis for a socialist humanism. But in important respects, *Dissent*'s difference from these European journals is greater than its similarity. *Universities and Left Review* arose out of the ferment in the Communist world following the Khrushchev admissions that the Stalin régime had criminally murdered thousands of innocent Communists and cruelly masked this terrorism with judicial

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frame-ups. *Arguments* (in both a French and an Italian edition) came into being after the events in Poland and Hungary, and in its intensely philosophical preoccupation, reflects the revisionist discussions which have been taking place in Eastern Europe. Both are part of the post-Stalinist phenomenon. *Dissent*, five years older than the other two, was founded largely by individuals who had left the Trotskyite movement (the "class of 1950"), and who were already well-schooled in the doctrinal debates of Marxist exegetics.

The difference in origin accounts for the differences in tone and content. The first two are products of the 'fifties, cut off from the past by the war and the tales of their tired elders; the latter is an echo of the 'thirties, repeating, in mournful anger, the obsessions and debates of the past. *Universities and Left Review* and *Arguments* represents a new political generation, with all the appeal of the tyro, and the bitter-sweet disillusionment of first love. *Dissent* is a magazine of the epigone, the jejune and weary. *Universities and Left Review* and *Arguments* are intense, phrenetic, naïve, and bursting with a new sense of auto-didactic wonder about theoretical issues that had been wrangled over by the Left twenty years before; *Dissent* is querulous, scornful, magisterial, sectarian, but infinitely more sophisticated about political issues.

These differences in style caricature, as extreme statements tend to do, the opposition between European and American radicalism. It is not only that America has become an affluent society, offering place (in the universities and the publishing houses) and prestige (if not in society as a whole, certainly in the universities and the publishing houses) to the one-time radicals—and it is interesting to note that the two chief editors of *Dissent*, Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, are university professors, as are most of their luminaries, like C. Wright Mills, whose books, in paper-back editions, circulate in some 50,000 copies—but American radicalism had, intellectually, long ago disposed of the questions that until recently had racked the serious European Left. It is this point—as well as the fact that American society, through the modifications introduced by Roosevelt and Truman, has belied the orthodox Marxist predictions of "fascism and collapse"—which explains many of the disparities in intellectual atmosphere between the two continents.

This is a seeming paradox. Europe, in legend, has always been the home of subtle philosophical discussion; America was the grub land of pragmatism. Questions laid to rest in Europe had their reincarnation (as an old quip put it) twenty years later in the United States. Whatever truth this remark may once have had, the reverse is true to-day. The questions which in the last five years preoccupied Sartre and Camus in France, Wolfgang Harich in East Germany, Kolakowski in Poland—those of ends and means, class truth, the validity of dialectic materialism as a scientific construct, the definition of a workers' state, party democracy, the nature of bureaucracy, the relationship to literature of propaganda, the mixed economy—were thrashed out more than twenty years ago by Sidney Hook, Ernest Nagel, Lewis Corey, Edmund Wilson, Philip Rahv, John Dewey, and dozens of others in the pages of *Partisan Review*, *The New International*, and *The New Leader*. It is not that these men had greater theoretical acumen than European Marxists, many of whom, individually (most notably Ignazio Silone, in *Bread and Wine*), had explored the same problems. But while in Europe only a small number of intellectuals left the Communist orbit before the war, in the United States almost the entire group of serious intellectuals who had been attracted to Marxism had broken with the Communist Party by 1940. Thus, as an intellectual problem, Bolshevism disappeared from the American scene almost twenty years ago.

The sociological reasons for these differences in atmosphere and response are varied. Being 3,000 miles from Europe the American radicals were not caught up in the immediate political struggles of fascism—or faced with the possibility of becoming refugees. There was thus far less reason to suppress political doubts fired by the Moscow Trials and the Nazi-Soviet Pact. In America, moreover, the Communist Party never had a large following in the labour movement, so there was no strong emotional force the party could use to hold the intellectuals. And, being free-floating intellectuals rather than functionaries or officials who had to swing a large political movement with them, political discussion was more "irresponsible," yet by the same token freer and more intense.

As a result of such free-spiritedness, the basic political drift of the former Left intelligentsia in the United States in the 'forties and 'fifties has been anti-ideological—that is to say, sceptical of the old rationalist claims that socialism by eliminating the economic basis of exploitation, would solve all social problems, and sceptical, in fact, of any ideological formulas for social change. To a great extent this scepticism of rationalism is the source of the American intellectuals' devotion to Freudianism and neo-orthodox theology (as expounded by Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich). In addition to this change in intellectual temper, the old Left began discovering new virtues in the United States because of its pluralism, its acceptance of the Welfare State, the spread of education, and the

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expanding opportunities for intellectual employment. And, in the cold war, they accepted the fact that Soviet Russia was the principal threat to freedom in the world to-day. These political attitudes were reflected primarily in the pages of *Partisan Review*, *Commentary*, and *The New Leader*, the three magazines, along with the writers grouped around them, who in large part became the core of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom.

On the academic level, these re-evaluations called into question the accepted idea of populist basis of American radicalism and argued that the political conflicts of the 'fifties, like McCarthyism, were more fruitfully explained by sociological concepts such as "status anxiety" than by the more conventional notions of class or interest group conflicts. These significant changes in intellectual temper can be seen in Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination*, Richard Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform*, Edward Shils' *The Torment of Secrecy*, and the various essays on "McCarthyism" in *The New American Right*.

It was in this context of the break-up of the old Left, and as reaction to these re-evaluations, that *Dissent* came into being. While it talked of the conformism of American society, its real concern was to defend the shards of Marxism against those who were calling the entire range of radical ideas—not just Bolshevism—into question. And the "internal" debate was carried on, as is usually the case in the United States, in that large, exotic cauldron, the New York intellectual world. Little of this, unfortunately, is reflected in the recently published volume, *Voices of Dissent* (Grove Press in America; John Calder Ltd. in England), a selection of articles from the twenty or so issues brought out in the magazine's five-year history. The editors may have thought that book publication might attract a more general audience; hence, the more parochial—and more interesting—aspects of the magazine were muted.

To take *Voices of Dissent* on its own terms: we find some fairly commonplace reportage about America, some thoughtful discussion of the errors of Marxism, some reflective essays about estrangement in contemporary society—the best of these, by Silone, Chiaromonte, Milosz, and Richard Lowenthal, were published first in other magazines in fact, those sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom—but there are few path-breaking thoughts about radicalism. "What Shall We Do?" asks one of the editors, Lewis Coser, in the one programmatic essay in the anthology. "Above all, it would seem to me," says Coser after a long wind-up, that the radical "must be concerned with maintaining, encouraging, fostering the growth of the species 'radical.' If it becomes extinct, our culture will inevitably ossify from want of challenge."

But challenge to what? Radical about what? *Dissent* attacked *Partisan Review* and *Commentary* for not being radical. But, beyond attacking these magazines, there was scarcely anything in *Dissent* that was anything more than horatory. It never explained what it meant by radicalism; and it has not been able, especially in the area of politics, to propose anything new. For *Dissent* has been hoist, as has been the "Left" as a whole, on the very meaninglessness of the term "radicalism." In the past, radicalism had vitality because it was a form of *apocalyptic* thought—it wanted to wash away an entire society in one tidal wave. ("I went to Cuba," writes Livio Stecchini in a recent issue of *Dissent*, in an article which characteristically expresses in extraordinary fashion the romantic pathos of the magazine, "because over the years I have become disappointed with revolutionary ideas and experience. Selfishly I wanted to share the exhilaration that comes from living by hope and desire *before the dawn of reality*.") But where the problems are to-day, as Karl Popper put it, those of "piecemeal technology" the prosaic, yet necessary, questions of school costs, municipal services, urban sprawl, and the like, bravura radicalism becomes simply a hollow shell.

If *Dissent* has had little new to say about politics, it has been in an even greater quandary, on the question of radical expression in the arts. In the United States to-day, whatever calls itself avant-garde, be it abstract expressionism or beatnik poetry, is quickly acclaimed and enthroned. In part this is due to the familiar desire of Americans for novelty and sensation. But on a more serious level the arbiters of taste are sensitive to the criticism of the past, and many of the cultural arbiters (Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg in painting, Lionel Trilling and Alfred Kazin in literature) are part of the *ancien* Left. This acceptance of the avant-garde has become so vexing that Hilton Kramer (an editor of *Arts*, writing in *Dissent*) was moved to say—I quote him exactly: "The fact of the matter is that since 1945 bourgeois society has tightened its grip on all the arts by allowing them a freer rein."

If *Dissent* has had a single unifying idea—and this is what gives any radical magazine character—it is its concept of America as a *mass society*, and its attack on the grotesque elements of such a society. And it is here that *Dissent* begins to have a tone identical with the *Universities and Left Review*, and with the other new voices of the Left which attack modern society.

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The concept of the *mass society*, however, is peculiarly amorphous. Those who used the older vocabulary of radicalism could attack "the capitalists" or even "the bourgeoisie," but when talking about *mass society* one simply flails out against "the culture," and it is hard to discover who, or what, is the enemy. This is not true of the older group of writers who first employed the idea of the mass society, principally Ortega y Gasset, Joseph Pieper, Karl Jaspers, and T. S. Eliot. They were men with an aristocratic, or Catholic, or élite conception of culture and for them the standards of taste and excellence set by the educated and the cultivated have been torn down by the mass. They stand against egalitarianism and industrial society. But it is difficult for the young radicals to take this aristocratic stance. Nor can they absorb intellectually the pastoral-romantic image (deriving from German sociology) that the communal roots of the old nourishing *gemeinschaft* have been torn up by the soulless, impersonal, mechanised society. This cry has always been the protest of rural society against the anonymity (which is also privacy and freedom!) of the city; and the young radicals are not "rural idiots."

The question of the *mass society* is complex, and not easily summarised within the boundaries of a note. The meaning of a *mass* society is that for the first time the mass has been brought into *society*, and are no longer excluded from the political rights and cultural heritage which previously only a few had claimed. I find the image of the mass society, as used by *Dissent* and *Universities and Left Review*, to be quite wrong, for I believe that modern society is, for the mass, more differentiated, variegated, and life-enhancing, in its cultural aspects, than traditional society. The bringing of the "mass" *into* society is a process which began only in the last twenty-five years, and as Edward Shils has shown, it is a difficult one. Obviously it is not just the spread of mass media but the raising of wages and reduction of hours and the consequent gain in leisure, and the spread of higher education that shapes the problem of how standards of quality can be maintained.

In the United States, one minor but positive consideration, about the new mass society, can be noted. The cultural élite, to the extent that there is one (and I believe there is), is primarily an academic élite—the culture of Harvard, Columbia, Berkeley, and other large centres—and, in contrast to what was true fifty years ago, it is a "liberal" culture, receptive to ideas, critical in its outlook, and encouraging to dissent. To that extent—and this is the final paradox—even *Dissent* is an accredited member of the culture, and a welcome one.

Beckett's Voices

All That Fall and *Embers* are recent plays for radio by Samuel Beckett. *Embers* was first performed in June (introduced by the BBC in the tone usually reserved for royal deaths and fifth symphonies) and *All That Fall* was rebroadcast at the same time to give a deeper purple to the occasion. Beckett's stock has reached a steady high at Langham Place. His novels and plays are clearly those of a poet, of someone who works almost exclusively with words and metaphors and incantation, and one would expect his gifts to suit the radio very well. They do; his poetic talents take kindly to broadcasting and broadcasting protects his lack of interest in character and drama as they are normally understood.

It would be misleading to imagine that Beckett's fantasies flourish on the air because of the rare use he makes of the medium. The incantation and the mumbling and screaming are powerful enough on the radio, but any further use of resources peculiar to the medium is apt to be awkward and extraneous. Especially in *All That Fall*, as they crunch heavily into place in the dialogue, the sound effects are meant to appear mannered and distorted, but the only obvious point in this artificiality is to indicate the symbolic or mental character of the events; listeners are bound to be ruffled and distracted. Added to that, the texts are too often cryptic and compressed for radio. *Embers* blurs when it is excited, and no amount of ear to the loudspeaker will clear up the really dark passages.

It may just be that there are fewer incidental jokes and tumbles in the new plays, of the sort which endeared *Godot* to the London West End, but on this showing Beckett's imagination has grown more derisive, offering fewer consolations and more and more sado-masochistic shocks. In each play the theme is the anguish and boredom of an old couple, and through it there seems to run even more than ever the sense that we are confined for life in a set of ruinously selfish dreams and aggressions. In *All That Fall*, which occurs in a sub-Irish country place with a pretty railway station and a race track, an old woman called Mrs. Rooney heaves her quarrelsome pathetic way to meet her blind husband, tyrannical-pathetic, Timon of Galway, off a train which is mysteriously overdue. The cause of the delay is eventually wrung from Mr. Rooney: a child had fallen under the wheels. The play finishes with a mad laugh at the expense of marriage and of the notion that "the Lord upholdeth all that fall." If these are the themes, however, they are not dealt with in Beckett's travesty of a kind of country

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comedy form. The comedy is never in the least diverting, and the lack of guidance and definition leaves us with a play which is as hideous as the events that happen in it (or half-happen), or which would be hideous if it were less uninteresting.

Embers contains more dotage but it is much more impressive. The scene is the seashore (the sea sounding portentously throughout the action). Mr. Rooney has turned into Henry, an old man who sits on the shore talking to himself and his wife Ada, and enacting conversations with his dead father and a hectoring medical man. His daughter's riding and music lessons ring out alarmingly from time to time, with the sinister, fixated quality which Ionesco brings to the same blameless bourgeois activities. Henry's talk reflects his isolation, the decay of his marriage and his memory, turn-about moments of rage and reconciliation with his wife, rage at his father, and occasional anger that his daughter should have been born at all. "Fire out," he says. "White world. Great trouble. Not a sound." Taking him to mention joining his father in death, Ada replies in her wave-whitened voice, like the bone on Yeats' shore, "nothing difficult about that." One spark of humour is an untoward, disarming pun on the play's own solemnity, when she presses her husband to smile: "it is not every day I crack a joke."

Embers has character and atmosphere: the ocean stirring before the old man, as he relates his idea of the end of life and of the death in which he is to be swept away. There are times when the poetry goes home, when it achieves a memorable bareness which seems to show a writer wholly extended to his work and which recalls the disturbing moments in *Godot* like Vladimir's cry, "Will night never come?" And, mainly in the exchanges with Ada, there are "domestic" bits which are horrifying and touching. Neither play has any dramatic weight to speak of; their funeral notes have more of the poet (and the ventriloquist) than most playwrights could ever afford; and they keep going on key metaphors and insights. *Embers* could be shortened into soliloquy without any noticeable loss. But there is more *to* the poetry in *Embers*, and it is sometimes very resonant and strong.

This idea of senility may well be Beckett's crowning metaphor, but it may also be the single most exasperating feature of his career. For the impression one receives is that the two plays are not about old people but about *all* people, that the image is meant—with due allowances—to express the deeper content of all human experience. In the end they are either about age or life, and the whole emphasis of them both makes it plain that they are not about the first. Now and then he is drawn to the peculiarities of old age as such. But in Beckett old age gets off to a very early start, the failing powers which he records in *Embers* have clearly failed at various ages in other plays—the gravedigger wields the forceps, as he says in *Godot*. There are plenty of ashes in the earlier plays for the "embers" in this one, and in fact the language of the present two is continuous, a more or less uniform shade of dark, with what has gone before, so that their pale new centenarians are an extension of the spryer tramps of five years ago. Again and again he seems to be saying here that the demoralising stress of existence, everything that numbs people and alienates them, has simply come to a head in Henry and Ada and the Rooneys. Human life has revealed its true nature in their dotage. Human life tends towards the inhuman.

It has been argued, of course, that modern life does obscurely approximate to Beckett's picture of it, that the world has come to this. One critic has written that his boredom is an image of human life which should console us in our "mood of liberal uncertainty." Others regard it as directly religious—an effect of the "aboriginal calamity" from which only that grace continually deferred in *Godot* can deliver us. I shouldn't have thought that Beckett's writings could possibly support such themes: they are only there for those who want them there, though his general approach is no doubt in line with interpretations of this kind. But they do trace out the nature of his appeal. Beckett is a fashionable reputation which is still "in"; it floated off on the strength of the clowning in *Godot* (audiences had that primary satisfaction but they were also able to feel involved in something cultural and tragic); and it has stood the test so far of the barrenness and nonsense which the author's sincerity has imposed. Once more, in the present plays, the higher satisfaction consists in a vague sense of the hardness and helplessness of life and of its remoteness from God.

Whatever Beckett intended to put into the radio plays, neither of them has the vitality or the coherence which these grand interpretations regarding liberalism and religion are likely to imply. Perhaps the most significant thing about them is the way in which the suffering they produce so often strikes one as his own, so often seems to come from a personality which is itself suffering or impaired. "Fire out," "great trouble," etc. is from the heart. The screams of hysteria are nasty because they appear to leap out of art altogether. The technical weaknesses of the plays, the boring repetitiveness and the obscurity, point equally to a writer who is consumed with certain feelings and who hasn't the

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means of control which art is supposed to need. Beckett is no joker, and it is as depressing to have audiences going for laughs or for a light dose of pessimism to plays that are in reality very grim as it is to see the marks of personal bias and debility accepted as major work. I wonder how many of them can really believe that an art which finds an absolute or conclusive meaning in this sort of misery is either valuable or convincing.

The whole drift of Beckett's writings which coops characters up in bell jars and buckets, in paralysis, blindness, and old age, is pathetic and presumptuous. What spoils these plays is the voice which whispers through them both and which if it went on long enough would tell you that people were bones or stones—as in *Embers*, pebbles on the beach.

Karl Miller

"The Two Cultures"

By Michael Polanyi

SIR Charles Snow complains about the gap between science and the rest of our culture. I concur. But I see the problem in a different perspective. I don't agree that the influence of science on the rest of our thoughts is too feeble. On the contrary, the claims made to-day on the minds of men in the name of science are comprehensive. Freud and Marx—little of modern culture is unaffected by the teachings of one or both of these two, and both derived their authority by speaking for science. Yet these teachings are but two streams of a wider flow descending from the Romantics and Utilitarians, themselves originating from the philosophers of the Enlightenment who were inspired by Newton's discoveries.

Admittedly, Greek thought was rationalist before the rise of science and a trickle of this rationalism has continued to flow through all the succeeding centuries. But it was the impact of 17th-century science that evoked modern rationalism and endowed it with overwhelming powers. "One day," writes Paul Hazard, "the French people, almost to a man, were thinking like Bossuet. The day after, they were thinking like Voltaire."

This is exaggerated, but the picture is dramatically true. We might add that just as the three centuries following on the calling of the apostles sufficed to establish Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire, so the three centuries after the founding of the Royal Society sufficed for science to establish itself as the supreme intellectual authority of the post-Christian age. "It is contrary to religion!"—the objection ruled supreme in the 17th century. "It is unscientific!" is its equivalent in the 20th.

If I yet agree that there is a gap, and a dangerous gap, between science and the rest of our culture, it is not such deficiencies as the ignorance of thermodynamics shown by literary people, mentioned by Charles Snow, that I have in mind. Even mature scientists know little more than the names of most branches of science. This is inherent in the division of labour on which the progress of modern science is based, and which is likewise indispensable to the advancement of all our modern culture. The amplitude of our cultural heritage exceeds ten thousand times the carrying capacity of any human brain, and hence we must have ten thousand specialists to transmit it. To do away with the specialisation of knowledge would be to produce a race of quiz winners and destroy our culture in favour of a universal dilettantism.

Our task is not to suppress the specialisation of knowledge but to achieve harmony and truth over the whole range of knowledge. This is where I see the trouble; where a deep-seated disturbance between science and all other culture appears to lie. I believe that this disturbance was inherent originally in the liberating impact of modern science on Medieval thought and has only later turned pathological.

SCIENCE rebelled against authority. It rejected deduction from first causes in favour of empirical generalisations. Its ultimate ideal was a

This continues the discussion of C. P. Snow's two articles in ENCOUNTER (June and July). Professor Polanyi has held a chair in both the natural and the social sciences at Manchester University, and his major work, PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE, was published last year. Sir Charles will be replying to all the comments in our next number.

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mechanistic theory of the universe, though in respect of man it aimed only at a naturalistic explanation of his moral and social responsibilities.

Set free by these principles, scientific genius has extended man's intellectual control over nature far beyond previous horizons. And by secularising man's moral passions, scientific rationalism has evoked a movement of reform which has improved almost every human relationship, both private and public. The rationalist ideals of welfare and of an educated and responsible citizenry have created an active mutual concern among millions of submerged and isolated individuals. In short, scientific rationalism has been the chief guide towards all the intellectual, moral, and social progress on which the 19th century prided itself—and to the great progress achieved since then as well.

Yet it would be easy to show that the principles of scientific rationalism are strictly speaking nonsensical. No human mind can function without accepting authority, custom, and tradition: it must rely on them for the mere use of a language. Empirical induction, strictly applied, can yield no knowledge at all, and the mechanistic explanation of the universe is a meaningless ideal. Not because of the much invoked Principle of Indeterminacy which is irrelevant, but because the prediction of all atomic positions in the universe would not answer any question of interest to anybody. And as to the naturalistic explanation of morality, it must ignore, and so by implication deny, the very existence of human responsibility. It too is absurd.

Scientific rationalism did serve man well as long as it was moving towards its false ideals from a great distance. But this could not last. Eventually the truth-bearing power of its absurd ideals was bound to be spent and its stark absurdity to assert itself.

This is what has happened in the 20th century. Scientific obscurantism has pervaded our culture and now distorts even science itself by imposing on it false ideals of exactitude. Whenever they speak of organs and their functions in the organism, biologists are haunted by the ghost of "teleology." They try to exorcise such conceptions by affirming that eventually all of them will be reduced to physics and chemistry. The fact that such a suggestion is meaningless does not worry them. Neurologists follow suit by asserting that all mental processes too will be explained by physics and chemistry. The difficulty of dealing with consciousness is eliminated by declaring:

> "The existence of something called consciousness is a venerable *hypothesis*: not a datum, not directly observable . . ." (Hebb). "Although we cannot get along without the concept of consciousness actually there is no such thing" (Kubie). "The knower as an entity is an unnecessary postulate" (Lashley).*

* These quotations are taken from the review by Sir Russell Brain (*Brain*, Vol. 78, 1955, p. 669) of *Brain Mechanism and Consciousness: A Symposium*, Ed. J. F. Delafresnaye (Oxford 1954). The views expressed by the famous three neurologists are not criticised by Sir Russell Brain in this review.

The manifest absurdity of such a position is accepted by these distinguished men as the burden of their scientific calling. Neurologists, like all the rest of us, know the difference between consciousness and unconsciousness; when they deny it, they mean that since it eludes explanation in terms of science, its existence endangers science and must be denied in the interest of science. Indeed, any neurologist who would seriously challenge this bigotry would be regarded as a nuisance to science.

The shadow of these absurdities lies deep on the current theory of evolution by natural selection. The selectionist must assume, and does in fact usually assume, that consciousness is *useful* since otherwise it would have been suppressed by natural selection; but since all bodily processes must be explained by physics and chemistry, he cannot admit that consciousness can set a living body in motion, which means that he assumes it to be *strictly ineffectual*.* I have searched the literature for a reply to this decisive self-contradiction, but in vain. Scientists do not enlarge on such questions if they want to be taken seriously as scientists.

Examples of such double-talk and double-think could be multiplied from the whole range of biological sciences. But I do not think that this denial of the true nature of things for the sake of scientific standards has yet caused widespread harm to science itself; it mostly remains on paper. In any case, I am primarily concerned in this note with the effect of current scientific principles on our culture at large, where the disregard of truth in favour of hard-boiled scientific ideals has spread confusion and led eventually to sinister results.

This process has run its course along a variety of lines. Take, once more, Freud and Marx. Their thoughts have transformed the heritage of the 18th century in parallel ways. The Enlightenment believed that man's moral responsibility would be safely grounded in nature. Rousseau trusted natural man uncorrupted by society; he established the intrinsic rights of great passions, of creative spontaneity and unique individuality. A drier, more mechanistic version of naturalism was developed by Helvetius and Bentham; it reduced man to a bundle of appetites feeding themselves according to a mathematical formula.

Like Rousseau's noble savagery, Freud's libido is restrained by society. But no noble features are ascribed to it; on the contrary, morality is imposed on the libido externally, and this restraint is actually condemned because it produces sickness. Good and evil are replaced by health and sickness.

The parallel movement from Bentham to Marx is determined by the denial of common interests between different social classes. Rightness is no longer achieved then by the triumph of utility over prejudice, but by the triumph of one class over

* When I urged a meeting of the American Association of the Advancement of Science (held in New York at Christmas 1956) to recognise the absurdity of regarding human beings as insentient automata, the distinguished neurologist, R. W. Gerard, answered me passionately: "One thing we know, ideas don't move muscles!" I could not believe my ears.

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another; good is what contributes to the victory of the proletariat, and evil is the contrary. Naturalism is thus transformed from a moral command into a doctrine of moral scepticism.

YET it is not this scepticism by itself that is distinctive of the modern mind. For moral scepticism, and the ensuing hedonism, libertinism, machiavellism, etc., have been current before now, and are only about as effective to-day as they were in former times. The decisive step in forming the modern mind takes place at the next move *when moral scepticism is combined with moral indignation*. It is the fusion of these two—logically incompatible—attitudes that produces modern nihilism. The Russian revolutionary of the mid-19th century, founder of all modern nihilism, was an ice-cold positivist burning with indignation and utopian fervour. His nihilism differed totally from moral scepticism. He used scepticism to express his horror of an unjust society and in so doing combined the two dominant mental forces bred by the age of scientific rationalism, namely scientific objectivity and a thirst for social renewal—both in the intensity achieved by them in the latter days of the rationalist age. This is how our modern sceptico-fanaticism was formed. It is a scientism crazed by a disappointed idealism—an idealism denatured by a mechanistic conception of man and society.

It was not a spontaneous outbreak of bestiality that perpetrated the horrors of this century. These were not the outcome of any weakening of morality by scepticism. No, the power that drove men to do these deeds was a rising tide of moral passions compelled by scepticism to accept merciless violence as the only effective mode of political action.

This is essentially true even of the bestiality of Nazism. It was rooted in German romantic nihilism, as reflected, for example, in the German *Jugendbewegung*. It believed that all decency is hypocritical and brutality alone is honest. Nazism converted patriotism into a theory of brute force, even as Marx converted Socialist Utopia into a science.

To the typical modern revolutionary the degree of evil he is prepared to commit or condone in the name of humanity is the measure of his moral force. He gives effect to his *immanent* morality by his *manifest* immorality. But such moral inversion is never absolute; at some point men will recoil from the demands of inversion and seek to re-establish truth and human ideals in their own right. This is when we hear of the god that failed.

BUT those who recoil from an inverted to a straight morality will still feel that their inversion had been a sign of a more intense passion for social justice. And in a sense they are right. Unfeeling people have remained immune to moral inversion simply because they had little social zeal seeking active manifestation.

In our age it is impossible therefore to speak simply of men as noble or ignoble. When Snow writes that "jam to-morrow" often brings out the noblest in man, one must ask which morality he means, the "immanent" or the "manifest." Acts that are glorious by one of these standards are utterly repulsive by the other.

This conflict of standards has divided human masses, split up families, and ruined friendships throughout the world, as no conflict has done before. "If ever in history there was a time," writes Tillich, "when human objectives supported by an infinite amount of good-will heaped catastrophe upon catastrophe upon mankind, it was the twentieth century." And yet greater disaster menaces us from the continuing disarray of moral standards. For in spite of recent improvement, there is still hardly enough common ground between the great revolutionary powers on the one hand and the traditional powers on the other, to secure the survival of man armed with atom bombs.

The consummation of scientific rationalism which has corrupted the public life of our century has opened up wide avenues of discovery to the arts. The line of modern writing descending from Dostoyevsky undertook to explore the limits of nihilism, in search of an authentic residue of moral reality. While this quest has sometimes led to meaningless despair, the movement has, as a whole, hardened the moral tone of our century and cleared the ground for re-laying the foundations of morality.

A parallel enquiry has explored the chaos created by the rejection of all existing forms. This too has sometimes led to inanities (like dada-ism) but the broad movement has been rich in discoveries. It has produced a world of harmonies responding to unsuspected sensibilities. It is enough to recall the magic domain of surrealism to which a deliberate absurdity of narrative content opened the way.

This movement was in fact but the culmination of an earlier, less radical, emancipation. Starting with the Impressionism of the 1860's, the past century has achieved the feat of pulling itself up out of a universal descent into realism and sentimentalism, towards the vigour of a new primitive culture. Such rejuvenation has, I believe, never before been achieved without the previous intermission of a long Dark Age.

Recently, a profound change has taken place in the temper of the European and American mind. Since about 1950 a general decline of social zeal has set in. In the West this change of mood has reduced utopian aspirations to more concrete projects of betterment, while throughout Russia and its follower States it has caused a recoil from the most monstrous forms of moral inversion. In Poland the reversion of the Communist intellectuals went much further than this, and in the abortive Hungarian revolution it would have gone all the way. In these two countries morally inverted man turned himself violently right way up. No such movement has ever taken place in previous history.

The corresponding intellectual movement, condemned as "revisionism" by the Soviet Government, has its counterpart in the West in a tendency to reinterpret the masters who had impelled the exploration of nihilism in a purely idealistic sense. Thus, in his widely read book, *The Sane Society*, Erich Fromm is led by a discussion of Freud and Marx to such conclusions as: "The mentally healthy person is the person who lives by love, reason, and

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faith, who respects life, his own and that of his fellow man"—a condition which is said to produce a Humanistic Communitarian Socialism.

But, though yet without a clear doctrine, the revisionism of the West is as strong as that of the Soviet empire and pursues parallel lines. Just as rebellious Communists reverted to popular nationalism, so did also the French people in moving towards de Gaulle; and everywhere, the recoil from a nihilistic rationalism was supported by religion—even while humanitarian rationalists of the 18th-century type supported this recoil in their own quite different way.

THIS, I believe, is the context in which the relation of science to the rest of our culture has to be reconsidered to-day. Science remains the only uncontested intellectual authority, and yet it can as little sanction the claims of nationalism, religion, or natural ethics as ever it could before. In fact, its criteria of objectivity must deny reality to any moral claims. No chemical analysis or microscopic examination can prove that a man who bears false witness is immoral. Nor can the logic of scientific rationalism, which has once already worked itself out among us to its last sinister conclusions, be suspended again by the inertia of custom. We cannot recover a previous state of innocence.

No, a humanistic revisionism can be secured only by revising the claims of science itself. The first task must be to emancipate the biological sciences, including psychology, from the scourge of physicalism; the absurdities now imposed on the sciences of life must be eliminated. The task is difficult, for it calls in question an ideal of impersonal objectivity on which alone we feel safe to reply. Yet this absurd ideal must be discarded. And once we succeed in this, we shall find that science no longer threatens man's responsible existence and that we can re-start the great work of the Enlightenment without danger of the traps that have so disastrously ensnared its progress in the present century.

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The Dour Man

By Robert Graves

THE discovery of *Dyscolos** ("The Dour Man"), a complete prize-winning play by Menander (of whose work only fragments had hitherto been extant) has roused little excitement, considering that the Greeks once regarded him as their greatest poet—Homer alone excepted. Born in 342 B.C., an admiral's son, a well-known dramatist's nephew, and a boyhood friend of the philosopher Epicurus, Menander was sophisticated, handsome, ambitious. An epigram tells how he visited Demetrius Phalereus, a fellow-Epicurean and for ten years head of the Athenian government: "entering his presence with languid tread and a powerful whiff of perfume." Menander, Philemon, Diphilus, Philippides, and Apollodorus ranked as the five leading "New Comedy" playwrights.

It was Philemon, Menander's senior by twenty years, who broke the last ties with Aristophanes' "Old Comedy." Aristophanes had caricatured all the most distinguished men of his day, mercilessly mocking at Pericles the warmonger, Cleon the demagogue, the irreligious Sophists (including Euripides), the corrupt city magistrates; yet he escaped punishment, Pericles being shrewd enough to keep this vent of public opinion unstopped. About 405 B.C., however, Pericles' successors imposed severe censorship on the theatre, and indiscreet political references meant gaol. What safe object of comedy could playwrights thereafter find? They might take off some semi-barbarous foreign potentate who was not sufficiently powerful to make effective diplomatic protest—as in the English 19th-century the Mikado and the Akhond of Swat were considered fair game. Or they might burlesque established classics and popular myths. Or exploit common character types, hoping that voices from the audience would cry delightedly: "There's my mother-in-law and my old pedagogue to the life!" But they resented the cramping of their style. Seventy years went by before the censorship laws were cheerfully accepted as stage conventions.

Philemon first formalised these character types. Apuleius wrote approvingly:

> You find in Philemon's works the perjured pimp, the impassioned lover, the cunning slave, the wheedling mistress, the domineering wife, the indulgent mother, the explosive uncle, the helpful friend, the boastful soldier; also greedy parasites, close-fisted parents, and shameless harlots.

Ninety-seven plays by Philemon are recorded, a high percentage of which won the annual City wreath. None survive. Menander staged a hundred-and-four, but to his disgust won no more than eight wreaths. He once asked Philemon—a Cilician adventurer, and suspected of bribing the judges!—whether he did not blush to be crowned at the expense of a genius like himself. The famous courtesan Glyphera amused herself by embittering their rivalry.

Meanwhile one Theophrastus had written a compendium of "Ethical Characters," described in richly circumstantial detail; and Menander needed only to provide comic plots for their interaction. Yet however emancipated a playwright's life, he might stage nothing in the nature of bedroom farce that would offend a chaste Athenian matron with marriageable daughters. Also, problem plays, or fantasies of the sort invented by Aristophanes, would be far above the heads of his audience. There remained straightforward, light modern comedy, centring on the deathless themes of love and money; into which smut or personal satire could not infiltrate unless through *hyponoea* (innuendo and *double entendre*) or unauthorised silent "business" on the part of some privileged buffoon.

Menander thought Philemon too literary a dramatist. Since the Athenians queued up whenever he read a new play aloud, he seems to have been a prototype of Dickens, whose stage-plays

* *Papyrus Bodmer IV.* Ménandre: *Le Dyscolos.* Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Coligny-Genève, 1958. £2 7s.

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did not provide such good theatre as his dramatic recitations. Menander aimed at verbal slickness, and put effective slapstick before rhetoric. In the course of the next hundred years, stock companies took his plays to every city where Greek was spoken. Also, the Romans Plautus and Terence adopted or plagiarised him. Through them he ended as the father of the English Morality Play, of the Punch and Judy show, and of Classical French comedy.

Yet mere laughter at his jokes dissatisfied Menander. He wished to earn a household name for proverbial wisdom. Aristophanes, in his *Frogs*, had satirised a similar ambition in Euripides. "I suppose," the god Dionysus scornfully asks him, "that you want to be quoted on all questions of domestic economy—such as what happened to that left-over sprat head and the garlic clove, or who's been nibbling at this plate of olives?" But some schoolmaster eventually collected "Menander's Moral Monostiches" in a text-book, from which many of them entered the *Dictionary of Familiar Quotations*: such as "Friendship implies common property," and "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (quoted by St. Paul from Menander's *Thais*). He specialised in phrases of condolence for deserted lovers or bereaved parents: among them "Whom the gods love die young"—but Menander himself, at the age of fifty-two, ventured out of his depth while bathing in Peiraeus Harbour, and the appropriate monitory maxim went down with him.

THE text of *Dyscolos* has been published by *La Bibliothèque Bodmer* of Geneva, with Professor Victor Martin's scholarly notes, a facsimile of the entire papyrus (*P. Bodmer IV*), and competent French and German renderings. Also an English version from which (as a dreadful warning against the academic colloquial style) let me quote the following dialogue between Getas the Slave, Sicon the Cook and Cnemon the Dour Man:

GETAS (banging on the door)
Hallo there, hey, fellows! I am calling, come on, hi! (Aside) *Gosh, I'm fagged out! Come on out, lackeys!*

CNEMON
I can't bear any more.... What do you want?

SICON
I ask you for cooking pots and a bowl. You have some, you have some, in very truth! (Redoubles his knocks.)

CNEMON
Hapless man that I am, how have I been brought out here? You caitiff, may all the gods make you perish miserably!

SICON
I should like a bronze mixing bowl. You've got one, I know you've got one, little father!

CNEMON
That Simike, I'll kill her!

Dyscolos is recorded to have won the wreath in 317 B.C., Menander then being twenty-five years old. Professor Martin writes:

> The place and the circumstances in which this early 3rd-century papyrus was found are unfortunately unknown, as is nearly always the case when pieces of this kind are acquired in the market of antiquities....

In other words, workers probably stole it from an Egyptian dig. The scribe's carelessness has demanded a deal of skilful emendation; so have various lacunae due to damaged margins.

By way of Prologue, Pan emerges from a grotto which lies between two houses, and tells the audience about the main characters:

> Consider this place to be Phyle in Attica.... The domain on my right is where Cnemon dwells.... He has always detested a crowd—did I say a crowd?—and in the course of his already long life he has never pronounced a single kind word, nor has he been the first to speak to anybody except by sheer necessity, or when he passes before me, Pan. And even that he promptly regrets, as I well know. And yet, with such a character, he married a young widow, whose husband had left her with an infant boy. Bickering with her under the yoke of marriage... he lived miserably. A baby girl was born to him. The conflict became unbearable, and the wife returned to the home of her son, issue of the first marriage. The latter owns a small property here where he poorly maintains himself, his mother, and a faithful slave inherited from his father. The son is now grown to a youth who has discernment beyond his age; for the experience of hardship matures us. The old man lives alone with his daughter and an aged woman servant, carrying wood, for ever digging, toiling, hating everybody all around.... The maiden has always been left to her own innocent devices: she knows no evil.... A young man, son of a very rich father who cultivates prosperous lands in the district, but he himself a man of town, came here hunting with a friend and saw the girl. I sent him madly in love with her. That is the main point.

A bad start. Pan says nothing that could not have been developed by later dialogue between the various persons mentioned, whom the audience has difficulty in identifying when they appear. Also, he is a "throw-away" character; though his worshippers, the chorus, choose the Phyle grotto as a scene for their outing, we never see him again.

Dyscolos recalls all the home-made plays ever

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performed in church halls and made amusing only by the incompetence and heroism of their amateur casts. Change the sacrifice at Pan's grotto to a vicarage picnic and, there you are! Cnemon, a small farmer, keeps himself to himself. A rich squire's son falls chastely in love with Myrrhine, the innocent daughter, to whom he has never been introduced, and sends Cnemon, whom he has never met, a letter offering marriage. The messenger having been rightly chased away with a shower of clods and a pitchfork, the squire's son seeks help from Myrrhine's half-brother. To deceive Cnemon into thinking that he is no city idler but an honest labourer, the squire's son agrees to handle a hoe for the half-brother. "If the girl had indeed not been subject to lessons from an aunt or nurse, knows nothing of the ugly side of life, but has grown up without too much supervision under a rustic father who hates evil, how could it be other than a blessing to win her? But this hoe weighs two hundredweight! It will be the death of me!" Since the half-brother and his step-father Cnemon never even bid each other good morning, the stratagem of course fails.

After antagonising all the picnickers by refusing to lend their cook a stew-pot, Cnemon accidentally falls down his own well. Myrrhine is dazed with grief—a voice from inside: "Oh, how terrible! He will drown! Save my darling father"—but the unkind picnickers suggest that a large stone should be mercifully dropped on Cnemon's head. The noble step-son, however, leaps in and rescues him—rather hindered than helped by the squire's son, at the well-head, who is so busy embracing Myrrhine that he lets go the rope three times. Cnemon thereupon undergoes a change of heart, recalls his wife—"Fetch your mother, my boy; it seems that one learns most from adversity!"—adopts his rescuer, marries Myrrhine to the squire's son, and even dances in Pan's honour. (Cries of "Author! Author!")

MORAL platitudes load the air: "Enrich the needy and lay up an imperishable treasure for your days of need!"—"Self-praise is no recommendation!"—"A true friend is better than buried treasure!" But all decent people will have sympathised with the reformed Dour Man. If he did not like being tricked by squires' sons and mocked by rowdy slaves, if he preferred Diogenes to Epicurus, if he worked his farm alone except for his affectionate daughter, whose earthly business was that?

One strange dramatic defect: Myrrhine, though necessary to the plot, appears only in the last scene but one, and then remains mute. Even the well-head incident is described instead of acted. And why? Because under Athenian

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law all women characters were played by boys or men; and handsome boys could not star in romantic parts, laying bare their love-lorn hearts, lest they provoked improper homosexual interest. The Elizabethan dramatists were hampered by a similar political censorship; but fortunately by a less repressive moral one—otherwise Romeo would have had no Juliet and Antony no Cleopatra. In fact, though neither this play, nor the large fragments, found in 1905, of *The Arbitrants*, *The Girl from Samos*, or *The Short-haired Lass*, stir much regret for the loss of Menander's other works, we should blame his age, not himself; and be satisfied at least that ten complete comedies of Aristophanes survive. Their humour may demand copious annotation, but they are still alive and real: *Lysistrata* can even play to packed houses.

© *Robert Graves 1959*

Saul Bellow

Henderson the Rain King. By Saul Bellow. *Weidenfeld and Nicolson.* 16s.

At a certain point in his writing career—after *The Victim* and before *The Adventures of Augie March*—Mr. Saul Bellow decided to make a change in his general approach to life and writing. Roughly, as I remember his own description of this conversion on the Damascus road, he decided to write affirmatively rather than negatively and to praise life rather than to find fault with it. He therefore abandoned a "negative" novel which he was writing and launched himself into the clamorous and gay picaresque of *Augie March*. This was followed by *Seize the Day*, which I have not read but which, so I understand, involves no negative back-sliding; and we now have a highly affirmative allegory about Western Man re-discovering his soul.

If I write of all this with a certain sourness it is because the nature of Mr. Bellow's conversion makes me very uneasy. I do not believe that things—real things—happen quite like this, and I am by no means convinced that Mr. Bellow's post-conversion career disproves my suspicions. His first novel, *Dangling Man*, was a brilliantly funny and sad little study of a vigorous modern American who had been forced by circumstance into an Oblomov situation. Receiving his papers from the army and leaving his job as a result, the hero's call-up was delayed for several months. During this period of enforced inactivity he underwent a convincing but totally unsensational *dégringolade*, taking, not to drugs or drink, but to an increasing sluggishness and an increasing devotion to newspaper reading. It was a book which told us a great deal about modern urban man by the deftest and most economical of means.

This was followed by *The Victim*, a more conventional but a very good novel in which the plight of the Jewish people was concentrated into a single case of highly complex persecution. It was a very Jewish book, melancholy, humane, and wry. And it certainly gave no impression of being the end of a journey—of having landed its author in a literary or spiritual impasse. It is absurd to describe either of these novels as "negative." They were books in which a strong moral position was constantly implied, and their half-comic sadness was itself an instrument of love.

Then came *Augie March*, with wide popular and critical acclaim. It was, without any doubt, a book of immense if rather hectic zest, written with breathtaking eloquence, filled with comic "Dickensian" portraits, readable, funny, and... oddly immemorable. What had happened was certainly not that all too familiar corruption of a talent. It was more as if a strong river had hitherto been disciplined to drive a single powerful turbine, but had now defiantly burst its banks and flooded all the surrounding countryside. The resulting effect was sensational; but it was possible to regret that in the middle of the flood the turbine was now scarcely moving. What was really being *said* in that monster of a book—except that life is rich with gaiety and sadness, rascality and charity? This is worth saying, of course; and worth saying over and over again. But can it be said, in our day, simply by multiplicity of illustration?

Henderson the Rain King is a much better book than *Augie March*. In fact it suggests that the flood waters are being brought under control again and that the turbine is turning faster. But there is, I think, still something wrong, though it is hard indeed to define or even to discover what it is.

The plot must be familiar by now. An American millionaire—a sort of humbler and more humane Hemingway—finds that his life has come to a squalid and incompetent full-stop in his own country. He journeys into a mythical Africa, receives wisdom from two different tribes, becomes the elected Rain King of the second tribe, witnesses the ritual murder of his friend the tribal chief and returns to America with a symbolical lion-cub and the sense that he has been spiritually renewed.

On most levels this is a quite *obviously* good book, which is not to say that its virtues are conventional. It is written with a wonderfully deceptive ease—an art, if ever there was one, which is busy concealing itself. Here is the opening.

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What made me take this trip to Africa? There is no quick explanation. Things got worse and worse and worse and pretty soon they were too complicated.

When I think of my condition at the age of fifty-five when I bought the tickets, all is grief. The facts begin to crowd me and soon I get a pressure in the chest. A disorderly rush begins—my parents, my wives, my girls, my children, my farm, my animals, my habits, my money, my music lessons, my drunkenness, my prejudices, my brutality, my teeth, my face, my soul! I have to cry, "No, no, get back, curse you, let me alone!" But how can they let me alone? They belong to me. They are mine. And they pile into me from all sides. It turns into chaos.

This is the writing of a man who knows, stylistically, exactly what he is doing and why he is doing it and who could easily do something else if it were appropriate. There are dozens of brilliant verbal felicities throughout the book, but not, as in *Augie March*, too many. The main point to make is that the style, though immensely contrived as all good fictional styles must be in our time, is consistently *right* for the book's purpose. It is a book, in fact, in which almost every page is good, and if I feel that there is something subtly but profoundly wrong then it must be the whole and not the parts which leaves me in this state of unusual discomfort.

Is it that the book is so openly and defiantly allegorical? Certainly we are ill-prepared for modern allegories and it is arguable that sophisticated allegory is a contradiction in terms. I was much more at ease with Henderson when he was still in America; and the early realistic pages are as neat a restatement of the modern American Tragedy as any I have read since *The Great Gatsby*. In Africa Henderson is as endearing as ever—and I mean genuinely endearing—but the stage properties behind him somehow detract from his reality, and therefore from our self-association with this delightful hero.

But that isn't all. My reproach is not, of course, that Henderson emerges triumphant and that the book is provided with a happy ending. That was implicit from the start. But it *is* a reproach—which many critics have made before me—that we do not see this re-born Henderson in action. How will he live now, in the same old America he had left behind him, with the same old wife and house and the same old teeth and the same old problems? This is not a trivial criticism for it implies a deeper one. If Mr. Bellow cannot show us how Henderson has been changed for the better—how he operates as a better man—can it be that the author himself does not fully believe in the transformation?

In fact, it may be that what disturbs me in this book is that one can still hear in it the embarrassing sound of a man whistling in the dark. This is the book of a sad man who "decided" to be affirmative. Mr. Bellow is nobody's fool. He has not written a jolly book: he gives us legitimate tragedy, in the death of the tribal king, and we are made fully aware of the price which has had to be paid for the regeneration of the hero. But what is lacking is that old war-horse, Ambiguity, which may have been worked to death by modern critics but which is quite capable of making his necessity felt by his absence. There is no genuine wavering in the book's steady and fore-ordained march towards the Triumph of Man. Yet we feel, I think, that though man may triumph, and though we hope with all our hearts that he will, he can do so only by remaining within the shadow of despair. Henderson feels guilt and horror, but he is, from the start, a man constructed for the special purpose of spiritual success. This limits his truth: and it limits his symbolic truth quite as much as it limits his realistic truth.

I feel that Mr. Bellow's spiritual and literary accomplishments have by no means kept in step. His extreme literary skill cannot quite conceal the fact that he has tried to take a spiritual short cut and that it has not really brought him to

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where he wants to be. Mr. Bellow may have to retreat before he can advance again, but it is a measure of his stature that his future is a matter which seems to concern us closely.

Philip Toynbee

The Last of Mann

Last Essays. By THOMAS MANN. *Secker & Warburg.* 21s.

THERE are degrees of exile. None more extreme than that suffered by German and Austrian writers in the Nazi era: exile from their own language. To the question of whether Germany could preserve some final remnant of moral literacy once it had been used to enact Buchenwald, of whether a language spoken by a Goebbels could ever again live in the neighbourhood of truth, Stephan Zweig replied with that most strident silence of suicide. Certain poets hoarded their speech in private mine-shafts. They wrote songs from underground, using rare words and secret connotations because the common inheritance of imparted meaning had been corrupted or destroyed by the prevailing madness. Others experienced the worst of impoverishments, learning an alien tongue in order to stay alive. Hermann Broch proceeded towards forms of discourse less meretricious than speech. He sought languages free of words. For words had lost their innocence; they had turned murderous and servile in the mouth of political terror. He moved towards that other face of silence, mathematics.

In this Diaspora, Thomas Mann fared best. The use of an archaic, unreal form of German in *The Holy Sinner* and the finalities of meaning ascribed to music in *Doctor Faustus*, indicate that he too was sensible of the ruin of language. But Mann's credence in Germany had long been provisional. Exile could not impair a consciousness that had always been extra-territorial and a craft which had early assumed the privileges and ironies of embassy. After the *Buddenbrooks*, Thomas Mann cast loose from his moorings and the flux of experience carried him to diverse solitudes. These, however, were tempered by the fact that he established for himself an intellectual peerage, a commerce with familiar spirits. They served as foils or whetstones to his genius. In constant dialogue with them, Mann elaborated the characteristic stability of his vision—a stability as of modern architecture, not implanted or confined in earth, but suspended amid the free play of contrasting forces. To four of these guardian presences (in a sense nearly astrological), this volume is a parting invocation.

Felix Krull is a parable of Mann's relationship to Goethe: love in the guise of larceny. When writing *Lotte in Weimar*, the novelist broke into Goethe's mind and the book testifies to the predatory powers of insight. To his last great work, Mann appropriated the master's pre-eminent theme, his Faust. But such incursions made off with more than literature. It was in Goethe's image that Mann adopted his own stance. His view of the world, his ironic governance of political emotion and intellectual chaos, were conceived in the Weimar style. Mann's liberality towards the conflicting pretensions of the two Germanies, expresses one of Goethe's favourite beliefs: that "national literature is of no great importance nowadays; the era of world literature is dawning, and everyone must do his part to hasten its arrival."

When he was a very small boy, Mann saw an old lady over whose cradle Goethe had made benign sounds. That arch of continuity spans Mann's entire performance. To it, this last "Fantasy on Goethe" adds little. The perennial motifs are touched on once again: Goethe as Joseph at the court of Weimar, Goethe as the incarnation of the European rather than the German spirit, as the Olympian gifted with mysterious vitality and the "innate merits" of health. And here, as before, the mask is too near the critic. The real Goethe remains to one side of Mann's passionate meditation. There was more blackness in him, more uncertainty. There were strokes of malice and failures of nerve in the drama of his relation to Schiller. To the last, the old Titan refused to say what he actually thought of Schiller's work. One hundred and fifty years after Schiller's death, Mann has repaired the omission.

His long commemorative essay is criticism in the ancient manner, an ornate *causerie* on prize-giving day. Flourishes of biography for the children ("Schiller was twenty-eight when he saw a young beauty at a masked ball in Dresden"); philosophical asides for the grown-ups. Judgments of particular dramas and poems build up to the festive encomium: the language of *Don Carlos* and *Wallenstein* "is the most brilliant, rhetorically-stirring idiom that was ever created in Germany, perhaps in the world." Yet there is unity in this essay, a unity of style. Not since his celebrated paper on Freud had Mann written with comparable virtuosity. The translation is loyal but fails to render the sheer music of the thing.

Unfortunately, the brass section does come through. As Schiller's spirit "rises to Elysian bowers" above a peroration on "freedom, art,

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love, peace, and man's saving reverence," one inevitably envisions the school choir leaping to its feet and intoning the Hymn to Joy. But the essential Thomas Mann lies deeper. There was something in his nature that is the obverse of pomp: a patrician diffidence, a tautness of sensibility made bearable by virtue of understatement. He was preoccupied by the notion that illness dignifies the soul, that physical infirmity reflects a conspicuous consumption of intelligence at the expense of life. That is the part of Mann most alien to the German tone and closest to Chekhov. It was Chekhov's refusal to assert order or achieve grandiloquence at the price of reason, his preference of doubt over the witchcraft of myth, that drew Mann to his art. To Chekhov he owed his sense of narrative in the minor key, his suspicion that the truth of life "is by nature ironical." But he recognised in Chekhov's modesty the axiomatic implication that the craft of the story-teller comes nearest of any to a rational apprehension of human affairs. Mann's essay on Chekhov is an exercise in gratitude, its style being as diffident and subtly relaxed as its subject.

Perfectly contrary to the Chekhovian view is that of Nietzsche. In Nietzschean mythology, certitude and reason are drawn so tight that they reach a breaking point of madness. Yet there were between Nietzsche and Mann elective affinities. Both looked on their inheritance, on the complex of German values, from high places beyond the frontier. Both saw in music a final temptation to the mind. They exercised a related mastery over German prose. (*Ecce homo* and *Felix Krull* demonstrate what swift, luminous cadences can be achieved on that ponderous instrument.) If Goethe served as model to the public figure, Nietzsche at times possessed Mann's inmost spirit. In the person of Adrian Leverkühn, he performed the crowning rôle in Mann's fiction.

"Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Recent History" is, therefore, the most notable piece in this collection. In a manner clearly related to the more elaborate presentment of *Doctor Faustus*, Mann portrays Nietzsche "driven upwards to the snow-covered peaks of grotesque error." That error sprang from the belief that moral consciousness poses a diabolic threat to the integrity of life. But even where it is most fiercely argued, this conviction has an element of travesty. It suggests to Mann a brilliant comparison between the cold furies of Zarathustra and the frivolities of Oscar Wilde (André Gide, one might add, being the actual link between both terms of the metaphor). Nietzsche was fortunate that he did not live to see his incantations realised. The "gang of megalomaniacal petty bourgeois" who claimed him for their own would have aroused his nauseous contempt. That is the real tragedy of this thought; beyond the personal shadow lay the greater blackness.

George Steiner

Imperialism in Full Retreat

The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies. By A. P. Thornton. *Macmillan.* 30s.

The ideas of empire and imperialism have occupied a place in political controversy for rather longer than the period in which they have been tested and analysed by scholars. Professor Thornton in his deeply interesting and often moving book on the vicissitudes of the imperial idea in Britain is treading on ground first explored by that great scholar, the late Richard Koebner, whose last post was that of Professor of History at Jerusalem—a university whose foundation-stone was laid by an ex-Prime Minister of England, and which might perhaps now have been one of the family of Commonwealth universities but for the miscalculations of one important section among contemporary British imperialists.

With this, Professor Thornton would not agree. A Scot, now Professor in the University College of the West Indies, his own outlook is detached enough on most subjects for him to be able to see the controversies from both sides. On the Middle East, however, he accepts the conventional views of the British "Arab experts" whose fundamental assumptions are now almost daily being called into question by the events in the area itself.

> No greater disservice [says Professor Thornton] was ever rendered to the cause of British imperialism than by its own support of the Zionist movement. The British aim for the Middle East was the establishment of a *pax Britannica*—a Victorian conception, it might seem, in the 20th century, yet one which circumstances in the area singularly favoured. But their insertion among the Arab *protégés* of an alien foster-child was to prove fatal to this hope, and to make nonsense of policies that were framed along ambitious and genuinely idealistic lines.

In fact, of course, such is the power of some forms of political illusion when they are powerfully backed within government departments, that Professor Thornton overlooks the incompatibility of these particular remarks with his own general framework. For the assumption

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that Britain's difficulties with the Arab world arise from her share in the promotion of Zionism will not stand historical examination. The shape of things to come was foreshadowed in troubles in Egypt years before the Balfour Declaration or the awarding of the Palestine mandate—and it would have been surprising had it been otherwise. For it is part of the burden of Professor Thornton's thesis that Empire is, among other things, a facet of power; and unless that power were there and manifest and respected it would not survive the universal 20th-century assault of nationalism. The Arabs would not have accepted willingly the rule of the British any more than the Indonesians would willingly accept the rule of the Dutch unless the relationships of power were so clear and the imperial power so determined to make its will felt, and so apt at eluding a direct challenge from nationalism, that its presence could be taken for granted. With or without the Zionists, the Arabs showed no signs of accepting as a permanency a British rule which, though undoubtedly better than anything they were able to provide for themselves, carried the inescapable taint of subordinating local interests to imperial ones.

The alternative to direct rule is political emancipation: and the other half of the doctrine so uncritically taken over by Professor Thornton from the professional Arabophiles is that there is some natural harmony of interests which (but for the Zionists) would have brought the independent Arab States to align their foreign policies upon those of Britain. In the post-1945 world this has meant an assumption that the Arab States would willingly have taken part in an anti-Communist front. But why should this be assumed when all the rest of the "underdeveloped" and recently emancipated countries, except for a few direct clients of the United States, have shown a resolute preference for non-alignment? We may rightly regard this as foolhardy and even frivolous; but the facts are there. And the fate of Nuri es-Said showed what are the consequences of opposing so deeply-rooted an historical trend.

Finally, it was argued that even this would not be fatal; that a united and independent Arab world could generate such internal strength and cohesiveness that it could be relied upon to avoid falling from non-commitment into an outright satellite status. But the idea that Nasser would be a sort of Middle Eastern Nehru has proved another illusion. The Arab States appear to be incapable of generating either the kind of political institutions that can be the vehicle of domestic reform, or a measure of unity sufficient to protect them against individual subversion. The quarrel between Iraq and Egypt has, once again, nothing to do with Zionism.

With this particular record of false prophecy on the part of one school of British imperial thought, was there not in retrospect something more to be said for the minority view? Would a different line have made it possible to visualise a state of Israel within the Commonwealth, a colony of British settlement by adoption as it were, and one with which a mutually advantageous arrangement for defence could have been reached? For, if Professor Thornton is right, and if one justification for the spread of British influence has been the spread of the liberal tradition, then in respect both of good government and of self-government, Israel has surely a better claim on the favourable attention of imperialists than either the ramshackle feudalism of the old Arab world or the gimcrack dictatorships of the new.

To BEGIN A REVIEW of Professor Thornton's book by expressing a difference on one particular point may seem unfair when there is so much to praise; but the point is a significant one. Professor Koebner (whose work is curiously nowhere referred to by Professor Thornton) showed how "the idea of imperialism" came to stand for two different things: a belief in closer ties between the self-governing parts of the British Empire, and the quite different idea of extending British rule over further areas inhabited by non-white people, and by and large unsuited to white settlement. In following the convolutions of the imperial idea, Professor Thornton himself does not always hold tight to this distinction; and indeed it could well be held that the space allotted to the Middle East in his book is out of proportion compared with that allotted to tropical Africa or to South-East Asia.

It is of course true that the anti-imperial reaction following upon the Boer War—a watershed in our history whose full consequences are perhaps only now being revealed—affected both aspects of the imperial idea. Professor Koebner attached greater importance than does Professor Thornton to the criticism of empire along Marxist lines—the thesis given currency by J. A. Hobson. But the consequences of the reaction, as he described it, would be endorsed by Professor Thornton. As Professor Koebner wrote ten years ago: "In England it has been a moral solvent. It has made people averse to colonial activity of every kind and apathetic towards imperial misfortunes; these could easily be construed as retributions for the economic imperialism of former days." And one could add that it has made people by and large apathetic not only towards imperial misfortunes but towards all projects for increasing the cohesiveness of the Commonwealth itself.

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Professor Thornton is probably wrong in writing as though "Suez 1956" marked some kind of atavistic throwback to an imperialist frame of mind; in as far as emotions were roused in favour of the action they were those of exasperated nationalism rather than of imperialism—and the subsequent acceptance, with so little criticism, of independence for Cyprus confirms the view that British imperialism is still in full retreat. But much more important is the failure of any attempt to make Commonwealth development a positive cause in British politics today outside the narrowest circles. One could almost say that the chief utility of the Commonwealth to most Englishmen has been the excuse it has provided for giving no serious thought to the problems of Britain's relations with Europe.

It is true that Professor Thornton is well aware of the limitations that Dominion attitudes have always put upon the possibility of concrete institutional development in this direction. He is nowhere more convincing than when he shows how little the language of the *Round Table* coincided with that of the dominant figures in most if not all of the Dominions in the inter-war period. Canada first! Australia first! even; in the eyes of Englishmen, it was Smuts who was the great imperial statesman from overseas—but the representative figure was surely Mackenzie King. One might put the present position by saying that Englishmen mainly talk as though Britain could have its Mackenzie King as well.

One strain in the criticism of the imperial idea has not been averse to the idea of a complete falling-away of imperial responsibilities—that Britain would be better off without them. It took Disraeli to see through the unstated and transitory assumptions upon which this attitude was based; for he, in Professor Thornton's words, "had an imaginative appreciation of the nature of political power which no one in his generation could match." But there was another version which although it might be critical of imperialism as it was, departed from this attitude in reference to imperialism as it might be. It was a transfer overseas of the impulse to reform and to improve which was so characteristic of the 19th century at home—an overspill of domestic radicalism. And here one kind of radical and one kind of Tory might find common ground.

> Imperialism in its best days and of its best type, was always equated with service. Prestige, like all respect, depended upon one's conduct and character. "In Empire," Curzon wrote, "we have found not merely the key to glory and wealth, but the call to duty, and the means of service to mankind. . . ."

This was a noble impulse, and not necessarily connected with the philistine anti-intellectualism that Professor Thornton sees as going alongside it in the public schools from which the empire's administrators were drawn. The weakness was that the full programme of reform must include elements that had little meaning except as a preparation for self-government. In words of Cromer, quoted by Professor Thornton:

> The Englishman as imperialist is always striving to attain two ideas which are apt to be mutually destructive—the ideal of good government, which connotes the continuance of his supremacy, and the ideal of self-government, which connotes the whole or partial abdication of his supreme position.

That position has been under a two-pronged attack: from nationalism in the countries governed, and from democracy at home. Democracy does not easily endure the long-drawn-out effort that imperialism demands, nor hold in honour the kind of personality which goes to make the successful imperialist. There is, however, a third strand which Professor Thornton says rather little about and which is nevertheless the key to the whole current dilemma. That is the changed "social climate"—the insistence on national independence not for its own sake, but for the sake of the advances in

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material prosperity that national independence is supposed to bring.

To call attention to this fact is curiously regarded as bad form in anti-imperialist circles. If one points out the obvious fact that the major division in the world to-day is between rich peoples and poor ones, and that the rich ones require some kind of ideology with which to cope with this situation, one is accused of suggesting a class-war of the rich nations against the poor. This is nonsense. What is clearly needed, and is very difficult to find, is a method of redistributing wealth internationally so as to close this (in some respects) still widening gap.

Experience in the last decade suggests that this cannot be done merely by giving money or by transferring the physical means of production. More important are western skills both technical and administrative; but administration depends on government, and government is politics. Therefore, one is in the dilemma of trying to do by international action some of the work that was once done by "imperialists." And we may have more to learn from their successes and failures than the anti-imperialists are ready to admit.

And here again, Professor Thornton's book is enormously apposite. For it is becoming clear that the western democracies are going to have to make collectively in the name of "aid" just those sacrifices that they have refused to do (for reasons partly admirable and partly reprehensible) for the sake of their own individual imperialisms. It is sometimes said that we must devise reasons for doing this work other than simple resistance to Communism if our efforts are not to be suspect. One could put it a different way and say that unless we can bring economic progress *and* freedom, we have no moral right to object to Communism's offer at least to bring the progress. That Communism's intervention may weaken our own economic and strategic position in the world is true, but the non-western countries can hardly be expected to worry about that.

Whether this challenge can be met without a substantial change in the West's own political system is by no means clear. There is a sense in which Professor Thornton's critique of imperialism ends up as a critique of democracy. On the title page he quotes John Stuart Mill: "Such a thing as the government of one people by another does not and cannot exist." In a sense that is obviously true. But the question to-day is rather whether a people can govern itself for purposes which include the promotion of the welfare of other peoples. And the answer to that question is much less obvious.

Max Beloff

Sociology Homework

Protest. Edited by GENE FELDMAN and MAX GARTENBERG. *The Souvenir Press.* 25s.

The Shook-up Generation. By HARRISON E. SALISBURY. *Michael Joseph.* 18s.

THE show is over, the lights have been switched off, and now with a melancholy and resounding thud the doors are closed. *Protest* is surely the very end: a fat, solemnly-edited book, in which are thrust the writings of some twenty-odd "Beat" and "Angry" writers, together with a preface by the editors, and introductory notes by them to each of the selections. The notes are really rather funny, in their mixture of earnestness and self-deception—embarrassing, too, when you read some of the stuff they introduce. John Holloway writes a cool and sensible piece about the "Movement," bringing it down to size, so the editors promptly reprove him for his "typical inability—or unwillingness—to engage his subject on its most essential level, as a criticism of existence in a time and a place which is also his own. . . ." So now you know: you have to take with a total and pie-eyed seriousness everybody who can be labelled *Beat* or *Angry*, and only then in the view of the editors are you "engaging the subject on its most essential level." "The Beat Generation have brought forth a new subject-matter: man himself, bereft of illusions, standing in the dark midnight of existence"—that is the tone they adopt, and seem to demand of everyone else.

One's kindest reaction is fatigue and indifference: how can one argue with people who talk in this way? Is there any *point* in arguing with them, especially when the argument would be nothing but a post-mortem, anyway? What is the use of trying to make critical or literary or social discriminations, when in conception and execution the whole book is nothing but a bloated monument to "togetherness," a kind of public-relations tombstone on top of a common grave? It is true that the editors do make some distinctions of a kind, but never with any instrument finer than a shovel: "The crucial difference between the Angry Young Men and the Beat Generation is that the former still care, the latter are beyond caring. The former still seek some connection with the world of Insiders, for within that world of false appearances is a truth of social reality. The latter completely abjure the Square's world and seek to create a new reality, one in which vivid experience is everything. . . ." (HAMLET: *Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?* HORATIO: *Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.*)

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Indeed, fatigue and indifference give way only to a kind of sympathy for those writers of merit who have found themselves trapped among the others. Kingsley Amis is a case in point; there is much in his work so far which is unsatisfactory, particularly his concern to keep himself dapper (in the best post-war style)—but still, the man does deserve better than to be found here, among so many writers of no merit at all. I suppose, in general, one can say that England emerges with rather more credit from the anthology than the United States, which is not all that much of a compliment, the American team being what it is. But about the English writers it is really too late in the day now to start talking of how they have come up from the grammar schools, and how they have made their subject the disappointments of the Welfare State, and the frustrations of the English class-system, etc., etc. We have all done our sociology homework; we are now waiting for someone to show us that our effort has been worthwhile. And unless the best of this group of novelists show a little more spirit, and a great deal more seriousness, it looks as though we will have to wait a long time yet. They have cleared away a certain amount of falsity and preciousness, they have exposed some of the dirt under the English carpet; but as for bringing in new furniture altogether, or knocking a few holes for windows into the walls, and really altering the look of the old home—no, they seem too afraid of making fools of themselves to try. The noise it would make! And the sweat you'd smell on them! So, in the meantime, they just make little rude noises; and the old lady upstairs loves them for it, it makes her feel ever so young again to hear them carrying on.

As for the Americans in the anthology—there are one or two decent and modest pieces: Anatole Broyard's is one, and even the bit from Jack Kerouac's first novel is quite charming in its way, and a great deal more sensible than the extract from his famous *On the Road*. For most of the rest, though, the book is taken up with a self-conscious celebration of the idea of delinquency; in the piece by Norman Mailer the argument for what can be called a delinquency. Ideology reaches a seriousness far beyond the reach of most of the other contributors. Mailer's argument is difficult to summarise (I must confess that I don't understand all of it) but I don't think it would be unfair to describe him as "hopeful": he is determined to see some good in hipsterism and delinquency and psychopathic violence—a social good, a political good, a psychological good. He sees the drug-takers and the store-robbers and the juvenile gangsters as revolutionaries, in rebellion against the world that has produced the hydrogen bomb and the concentration camp.

> The common denominator for all of them is their burning consciousness of the present.... There is a depth of desperation to the condition which enables one to remain in life only to be engaging death, but the reward is their knowledge that what is happening at each instant of the electric present is good or bad for them, good or bad for their cause, their love, their action, their need...."

Elsewhere in the essay, it is true, Mailer admits that these people might well become the first to follow some new totalitarian leader (as their equivalents certainly did in Hitler's Germany; why doesn't Mailer mention the parallel?), but the more general tone of the piece is given by the quotation above. And respect and admiration are unmistakably present when Mailer writes of "the life-giving answer" of the hipster who "divorces himself from society," "exists without roots," and sets out on "that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self...."

Then one reads a book like *The Shook-up Generation*, which is about juvenile delinquency in America, and one can only wonder if the political radicalism for which Mailer once spoke is now so totally bankrupt that it must see its *"élite"* in the mental and moral cripples described by Mr. Salisbury. *The Shook-up Generation* is not a very good book: its intellectual breath is too short, it is too anecdotal and journalistic for its subject; yet Mr. Salisbury has made the effort to find out what these delinquents are like; and there is a harsh irony, in the view of Mailer's hopes, to read how fear-bound the delinquents are, as hamstrung by their own gangster-societies as any corporation-clerk is by his corporation. But what else could one expect them to be? What kind of political or intellectual romanticism is it which hopes to find "freedom" in the world of the zip-gun and the hypodermic needle, in the gang-rumble or the "circle-jerk"? There is no escape for any of us, anywhere, from "society"; there are only better and worse societies.

It is true that we have failed hopelessly to deal with the violence within ourselves and so within our larger societies. We have failed to deal with the hydrogen bomb as we have failed to deal with the juvenile delinquent. And it is the measure of our failure that we feel a certain incredulity when a reporter like Mr. Salisbury ends his book with the remark that

> violent juvenile delinquency can be reduced to modest proportions rapidly... simply by employing techniques which we very well know and institutions which already exist.

This isn't the kind of thing we want to hear: there is an element in us all which wants Pro-

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tests, ultimates, breakdowns, "kicks" that will kick us to pieces. And we will get them too, and all the more quickly, if writers of the intelligence and seriousness of Mr. Mailer choose to pander to this destructive lust of ours, rather than to serve our older and much humbler desire simply to live in this world, and have our children live in it too.

It must be added, however, that to speak in these terms of some of the "Beat" pieces which keep company with Mr. Mailer's in the anthology is to compliment them unnecessarily. Mailer makes no mention at all of the writing which is supposed to have emerged from hipsterism, so it would be unfair to saddle him with responsibility for any of it. The responsibility is borne entirely by those who have so manipulated the arithmetic of success that nowadays one insignificant writer added to another insignificant writer never equals anything less than a "significant trend."

Dan Jacobson

A Very Good Critic

The Business of Criticism. By HELEN GARDNER. *Oxford University Press.* 15s.

FOR some of us at least, *Criticism*—particularly with its capital C—is rapidly becoming more or less a dirty word. Considering some recent performances of this vaunting parasite of literature, we are not to be blamed for that: we have been too bored, too bossed, too bamboozled. That some of its practitioners are, at any rate subconsciously, aware of a mounting tide of protest against their protestations; that their ears, attuned as they are to the nicest overtones of the minorest poet, have also caught the unmistakable slushy whirr of ten thousand worms turning at once; is sufficiently evinced by the recent spate of critical *apologiae vitae*. Sometimes with condescension, sometimes with bravado, we are told by the critics how their profession is the most authoritative, the most responsible, the most serious of disciplines—not that we think much the worse of them for that, for it is natural for any man, tinker, tailor, or sailor, to reckon his own job best; provided he does not (as critics tend to do) speak of the naïvety of others thereafter.

It is peculiarly unfair, however, to come to Miss Gardner's *The Business of Criticism* with any such prejudice. On any sort of showing she is a very good critic indeed, and these excesses injure her, as a critic wholly innocent of them, much more than they can us: and whatever doubts we may have about the validity of critical pretensions, she voices for us with much more firmness and elegance than we ourselves could have brought.

> Response to a work as having value [she says] is the beginning of fruitful critical activity as I see it. The critic's function, then, is to assist his readers to find the value which he believes the work to have. To attempt to measure the amount of value, to declare or attempt to demonstrate that this poem is more valuable than that, or to range writers in an order of merit, does not seem to me to be the true purpose of criticism.

This is a wise limit, but few critics have what we may simply call the *common-sense* not to overstep it. Even Mr. Eliot (Miss Gardner rightly feels) oversteps it when he declares

> The rudiment of criticism is the ability to choose a good poem and reject a bad poem; and its most severe test is of its ability to select a good *new* poem, to respond properly to a new situation.

This notion of some sort of "essence of goodness," immediately detectable by a trained nose, is surely an authoritarian chimera. And as for the ability to tip winners in the Parnassus Stakes, that belongs to "the connoisseur rather than the critic": literary journalism, as practised (indifferently or otherwise) by such persons as myself, is a skilled—though I would add, inferior—occupation quite distinct from the proper pursuit of criticism. Keats, as Miss Gardner points out, was a poor tipster: he saw in the first two cantos of *Don Juan* (he lived to read no others) only "a paltry originality." That does not affect his status as one of our greatest critics, which rests on his *positive* abilities to recognise and illuminate qualities of the poetic imagination unperceived before, not on a knack for the snap judgment.

Furthermore (Miss Gardner continues), the desire to sit in judgment, to play the connoisseur, is actively as well as passively deleterious:

> A mind which is concerned with being right, which is nervously anxious not to be taken in, which sits in judgment, and approaches works of passion and imagination with neatly formulated demands, is inhibited from the receptiveness and disinterestedness which are the conditions of æsthetic experience. The attempt to train young people in this kind of discrimination seems to me to be a folly, if not a crime.

These are words to be inscribed over many portals on both sides of the Atlantic, together with that apt and cutting remark of Quintilian that "the boy who gives least promise is one in

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whom judgment develops in advance of the imagination."

It will be seen, even from these brief quotations, that the introductory essay from which they are taken is by way of being a central text for determining the proper relationship of the critic to his profession. I find I have marked many passages; and I shall do myself the pleasure of transcribing a few more of them without further comment:

> I feel little confidence in the judgments of any critic who does not make me feel, however minute his analysis, and however laborious his researches may have been, that his motive force has been enjoyment.
>
> The beginning of the discipline of literary criticism lies in the recognition of the work of art's objective existence as the product of another mind, which exists not to be used but to be understood.
>
> The critic's task is to assist his readers to read for themselves, not to read for them. He must respect their sensibilities by not obtruding his own.... There is a point at which the reader must finally be left alone with the poem.

It seems to me that the only legitimate dispute with this view of the critic's function might be concerned with the exact placing of that last-mentioned point. Some (of whom I am one) would be for setting it very far back indeed. It is at least arguable that nothing of value can be taught but methods: absolutes, beliefs, decisions, attitudes are real mental values only in so far as they are self-bred, not imported. But, wherever the point be set, one thing at least is abundantly evident: criticism, as here properly conceived, is purely educational; and its professors are more (or less) glorified schoolmasters. They help the reading mind to maturity and have then to let it fly. This is illuminative criticism. There is, of course, also what one might call "practical" criticism were the term not already pre-empted: the establishing of texts, identification of authors, discovery of sources. But beyond these two there is no other valid and viable criticism, no matter what may be claimed by other jockeys who act as if they had invented the horse. This is a truth not lost sight of by this modest but spirited, quiet but not tame, critic, who is an undeserved honour to the profession that she adorns.

Hilary Corke

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Stalin Re-visited

THE most extensive dumping operation in publishing history has just been carried out: the *Short Course of the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (first published in 1938) has been replaced by a new textbook. The old one, which ran into 50 million copies, has now been thrown into the "dustbin of history."

The new version was slow in coming. After the condemnation of the *Short Course* by Khrushchev in his "secret speech" at the 20th Congress, an 11-member editorial board under B. N. Ponomarev was set up "to prepare a popular, Marxist textbook of Party history, based on historical facts." It was to be ready within a year, but evidently the struggle for power among Stalin's heirs (and the 1956 upheaval in Eastern Europe) delayed its completion. Too many delicate points needed careful reinterpretation; too many of Stalin's *entourage* were falling by the wayside. Only now, with the consolidation of power of the new Party Secretary, has the new official version of Party history appeared. The first edition was sold out in a few hours.

The new textbook is twice as long as the *Short Course*. It is quite up-to-date and even includes a chapter on the 21st Congress and the 7-year Plan. If the *Short Course* was launched to shape the historical myths of the "Stalin epoch," so the new textbook offers revised material to establish the historical perspective of the generation to be formed politically under Khrushchev.

As could be expected, the most striking difference between the old and the new presentation of the "historical facts" is the rôle attributed to Stalin. The *Short Course* was, of course, one of the instruments of Stalin's self-aggrandisement where he attributed to himself deeds performed by other actors. Having liquidated them, he either retrospectively ascribed treacherous actions to them or erased their names altogether from the history of the revolution.

The new version puts Stalin in his place, without giving back their real rôle to the original actors. In the *Short Course* Stalin was first mentioned in connection with his pronouncement on the Baku strike of 1904. "He resolutely prepared the workers for the decisive battle against autocracy." This and many other references, often joining Stalin's activity to that of Lenin before, during, and after the 1917 revolution, are now omitted. The differences among the Bolshevik leaders after the February revolution and before Lenin's return from exile receive new treatment. Stalin's rôle in the revolution and Civil War is deflated and several historical falsifications of it are now dismissed. But he has not been reduced to a secondary rôle, although he is often made to appear one among many in the company of other Bolshevik leaders. Not infrequently he is presented as the spokesman of the Party, at a discreet distance behind Lenin, but unmistakeably the most important among Lenin's followers. The myth of Stalin's feats on the southern front in the Civil War, fostered assiduously in his lifetime, is eliminated. Nor is the failure of the Red Army in the battle of Warsaw in 1920 attributed this time to "the wrecker's order issued by Trotsky" but simply to "the errors of Soviet command." Stalin's rôle in the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary periods, though not made negligible, is definitely diminished.

However, in the chapters devoted to the struggle with the opposition, he comes into his own. True, Lenin's testament, which gave a negative assessment of Stalin's character and proposed that he be replaced by somebody else, is quoted, but it is explained that the Party Congress

> taking into consideration the services rendered by J. V. Stalin, his relentless struggle with Trotskyism and other anti-Party groupings, decided to leave him in the post of general secretary, with the proviso that J. V. Stalin should take into account the criticism of him by V. I. Lenin and draw the necessary conclusions.

Stalin's services in defeating the opposition receive full personal praise. His pamphlets are quoted as defending Leninism, and his book *Problems of Leninism* is described as helping "the communists in the struggle against the perversion of Leninism . . . to strengthen the faith of the working class in the possibility of building a socialist society in the Soviet Union by its own efforts, without waiting for the state support of the West-European proletariat."

In comparison with the period of Stalin's struggle for power, his personal rule in the subsequent two decades is heavily played down. He is mentioned only occasionally and is then presented as subordinate to some sort of collective polity: he published his article *Dizzy with Success* "according to the decision of the Central Committee," he "was *put* at the head of the armed forces" during the war, etc. All the historically important political and economic decisions are attributed to the "wise policy of the Party and the Soviet Government" and it is impossible to learn from the new textbook what the "personality cult of J. V. Stalin," which it condemns, was like. Nor for that matter can one learn anything about its causes, or its consequences. The new textbook refers to "the infringements of Party and Soviet democracy" and of "the principle of collective leadership": "Many important problems were decided by Stalin personally." But we are not told what these problems were. All political decisions then taken that are specifically mentioned are praised unreservedly.

The same curious double treatment is applied to all the post-war ideological *causes célèbres*. The resolutions of the Central Committee of 1946 and 1948, which led to the persecution of writers and artists, are mentioned favourably. This despite the fact that they were partly rescinded afterwards, having allegedly resulted from the harmful influence exercised by Beria and Malenkov on Stalin.

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The Lysenko affair, Stalin's contributions to linguistics, and his *Economic Problems of Socialism* are also referred to half-approvingly though elliptically. The final verdict on Stalin is quite favourable:

> The essence of the Party criticism of the personality cult consisted in the removal of the harmful consequences of this cult and in the strengthening thereby of the position of socialism, and *not* in the general denial of the positive rôle of J. V. Stalin in the life of the Party and of the country. Under the leadership of the Communist Party and its Central Committee, in which J. V. Stalin played a leading rôle, the Soviet Union achieved enormous world-wide successes. J. V. Stalin did much that was beneficial to the Soviet Union, to the CPSU, and to the whole international workers movement.

Thus Stalin emerges somewhat battered from this operation, but not as mauled as he was in Khrushchev's "secret speech." Despite "the serious mistakes committed by him in the last period of his life," he remains a "positive hero" of our time.

Comrades and the Memory-hole

THE Moscow Trials of 1936–8 are simply not mentioned in the new "history." The *Short Course* called Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev the "real and direct organisers of the murder of Kirov." The new textbook diplomatically announces that the murderer was a "rabid renegade" (with a Party card) who "associated with the former members of the Zinovievist anti-Party group."

However, though the members of the opposition are still attacked as enemies of the Party, they are no longer accused of being "a gang of fascist hirelings" engaged in "spying and wrecking activities." (Nevertheless, only one of the defendants in the Moscow Trials has been rehabilitated so far, the First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party, Akmal Ikramov, who was shot in 1938. His rehabilitation was disclosed in Volume III of the *Small Soviet Encyclopedia*. The new textbook does not refer to it and glosses over the Moscow Trials and all their victims.)

The treatment of other important figures is no less revealing. The new textbook draws a curtain of silence over Marshal M. N. Tukhachevsky. The *Short Course* asserted that success in the Soviet-Polish war of 1920 was "frustrated by the suspicious actions" of Trotsky and Tukhachevsky. The latest edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* accused Tukhachevsky of "collusion with the enemy." But Volume 51 of the same *Encyclopedia* (published in 1958) rehabilitated him and described him as "an outstanding military leader." The "rehabilitation" was short. After the dismissal of Marshal Zhukov, Tukhachevsky's name disappeared from the lists of commanders selected for honourable mention in Soviet journals and now the omission has been made official. He has been erased from the pages of the new Party history.

The Great Purge is described obliquely in a confused chronology of events. Beria, who replaced Yezhov at the end of the Purge, is made to precede him. Yezhov, who was mentioned favourably in the first edition of the *Short Course*, but disappeared from the second, has now reappeared, but in a different rôle. The allusion to the Great Purge is almost explicit:

> Many innocent and honest Communist and non-Party people become victims of repression. In this period, a rogue and political adventurer, Beria, made his way into responsible state posts. Not stopping at anything and exploiting the personal shortcomings of J. V. Stalin for his criminal purposes, he slandered and liquidated many honest persons devoted to the Party and the people.
>
> In the same period, Yezhov, who had been Commissar of Internal Affairs, played an infamous rôle. Many workers devoted to the Party, Communists and non-Party, were slandered and perished because of him. Yezhov and Beria were justly punished for their criminal activity.

The Party historians have had new difficulties in dealing with purged but non-liquidated Soviet leaders. The Orwellian "memory hole" technique is applied to some. The names of Molotov and Kaganovich, with two exceptions, are deleted from the new text, until it comes to the defeat of the "anti-Party group" at the June 1957 Plenum. In the *Short Course* there had been a reference to the struggle against the "anti-Party groupings" at the time of the 10th Congress; now it has disappeared. No wonder, for it maintained that in the Ukraine the struggle was "led by Comrade Molotov . . . (and) in Central Asia, the fight against the anti-Party groupings was headed by Comrade L. Kaganovich." *The Short Course* affirmed that "the Red Army was victorious . . . because the political education of the Red Army was in the hands of men like Lenin, Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin, Sverdlov, Kaganovich. . . ." Now the list of the architects of victory no longer includes Molotov or Kaganovich.*

The report made to the 19th Congress of the Party in October 1952 was delivered by Malenkov. This is omitted. Someone else who spoke on that occasion is mentioned instead: "The 19th Congress discussed the report on the changes in the Party statute made by N. S. Khrushchev."

The New Khrushchev

KHRUSHCHEV comes into prominence in the new textbook only with the war and, of course, in the post-Stalin period. He is mentioned on earlier occasions, but usually in company. During the Great Purge he was already First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, and he was a member of the Politbureau by the time of the 18th Congress, but the necessity to conceal the collective guilt of the Stalinist Politbureau during the "in-

* Not only has the biography of "*Beria*" been replaced by an article on the "*Bering Straits*" in the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia*, but the ship called "*Molotov*" has been renamed "*Baltika*." The town Molotov has become Perm again, and all pictures and documents referring to Molotov's rôle in the revolution (he was then the editor of *Pravda*) have been removed from Lenin's Museum of the Revolution. The name of the underground station nearest that Museum has been changed from "Lazar Kaganovich" (who was in charge of building the Moscow underground); it is now called "Okhotny ryad."

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fringements of the principle of collective leadership," as well as the erasure of the names of Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich, apparently contributed to the decision to start Khrushchev's historical career at a date later than that at which it really began. This is understandable. Speaking on January 30th, 1937, at a public meeting, Khrushchev had this to say about the second Moscow Trial:

> These miserable nonentities wanted to destroy the unity of the Party and the Soviet State . . . they raised their treacherous hands against Comrade Stalin . . . Stalin—our hope, Stalin—our desire, Stalin—the light of advanced and progressive humanity, Stalin—our will, Stalin, our victory. . . .

Since the rôle which Khrushchev played in the purge was conspicuous enough, his speech to the 18th Congress (which is not quoted) cannot be construed as an alibi:

> The successful and victorious destruction of fascist agents, and of all those contemptible Trotskyites, Bukharinites, and bourgeois nationalists, we owe, first of all and personally to our leader, the great Stalin.

Khrushchev's attack on Stalin in his speech at the 20th Congress remains "secret." The book's editors do quote the *Stenographic Report of the 20th Congress*, but cannot give any reference to the speech itself since it is not included in the *Report*.

The new textbook contains no personality cult of the present Party Secretary comparable to that of the old one. Yet the nearer it comes to the present, the more frequently its pages are sprinkled with Khrushchev's name. All the important decisions and achievements of the post-Stalin era are attributed to his personal initiative, starting with his condemnation of the personality cult.

The Soviet leaders are always busy smoking out "revisionists." But are they not themselves the greatest revisionists of all? For are they not constantly revising their own past? The "permanent revolution" seems to call for a permanent revision of history. New textbooks do not merely supplement the old: they obliterate them. As with the Brooklyn Bridge, repainting already begins before the finishing touches have been put on the previous coat.

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Jails and Jamborees

At the International PEN Congress in Tokyo (September 1957), the Hungarian PEN Centre had been suspended. Its representatives, Bolonyi and Ronai, had admitted during the preliminary talks in London that they had not been elected, that the Centre had not held elections during the last decade nor any other meetings. In fact it had no real membership, only executive officers, all nominated by the Kadar government. Its only signs of activity were confined to the international scene, where the Kadar régime was trying to achieve some measure of recognition.

This appeared to be a difficult if not impossible task. Many of the leading Hungarian writers—including the foremost novelist and the foremost playwright of the country, Tibor Dery and Gyula Hay—were still in prison. New proceedings against some others (who had remained free during the period of post-revolutionary repressions) had been instituted. Recently a Budapest court went on to pass sentence on Professor Ferenc Merei (condemned to ten years of prison); the historian, Sandor Fekete (nine years); the young professor of literature Gyorgy Litvan (six years); and on two university teachers, Jeno Szell (a former ambassador to Rumania—five years) and Andras Hegedus (two years).

While the preparations for this trial were being made, a "Committee of Five" (appointed by the International Executive of the PEN, late in 1958) was re-investigating the affairs of the Budapest Centre. It proposed, in a burst of *realpolitik*, the "suspension of the suspension," and at the recently held PEN Congress in Frankfurt, amidst festive chit-chat along Rhine and Main, the decision was endorsed against the bitter opposition of the representatives of the PEN-in-Exile. A minority—surprisingly, shockingly small—tried, in vain, to explain that as long as the writers who had fought for the main principles of the PEN (freedom of thought and speech) remained in prison, a readmission of the pseudo-Centre would amount to a mockery of the PEN charter, and would only serve to depress and demoralise just that libertarian vanguard that had shown courage and independence.

Unconditional readmission of the Budapest Centre amounted to unconditional surrender. There was some talk in Frankfurt of asking the Hungarian representatives to "redouble" their efforts; but, as was acidly remarked in the debate, twice nothing is nothing; the Kadar régime had received its "certificate of good conduct," and at no price at all. Would the capitulation hasten the release of the writers? Paul Ignotus and George Paloczy-Horvath, among others, had argued to the contrary. If the question of freeing Dery and Hay could possibly have been put on the Budapest agenda, now the opportunity was lost; thoughtlessly, naively, or cynically squandered.

With the official reinstatement of the Budapest Centre, a telegram—signed by André Chamson, Alberto Moravia, David Carver, and Erich Kaestner—was dispatched, asking that Dery (whose health, at 70, is bad) and his fellow-prisoners be freed. The reply (oh, the ingratitude of it all: all *quid*, no *quo*) was quick and firm. According to Dr. Jazsai Dezso (the Inspector of the Hungarian Ministry of Justice), the writers had been sentenced "for crimes committed against the Hungarian people" and that "at present your request cannot be fulfilled. . . ."

A sad spectacle, when Western men of letters play at international affairs as if they were calculating card-up-the-sleeve diplomats. Far less would have been more politic. (A small informal committee, including T. S. Eliot, Albert Camus, Karl Jaspers, and Ignazio Silone, is still trying to help Dery, Hay, and the others, under the simple old-fashioned inspiration of loyalty to fellow-writers.) Has the high literary life of the West become so gay, so co-existentialist, that no one can tell the difference between jails and jamborees?

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LETTERS

Russell Howe's Expulsion

IN MY comment [ENCOUNTER, June] on Peregrine Worsthorne's article on Ghana, I wrote: "It is true that we in Accra endure the discomforts (as well as the comforts) of strong-arm rule." As you noted in your July number (p. 33), I was ordered to be expelled from Ghana on June 2nd.

As my expulsion appears to have caused considerable surprise among the African specialists in Britain, and staggered Accra (it startled me too, in spite of the sentence mentioned above), some clarification of the measure taken against me is perhaps useful, for the record.

A Government statement (by Information Minister Kofi Baako) alleged I had failed to check the veracity of (unspecified) reports, had been warned about this "on a number of occasions," had published false information about cabinet changes, and had published information, two days before, about the Tunis meeting of the steering committee of the All-African Peoples' Conference which would "damage Ghana's relations with other African states."

The last point is the one that counts: the rest is window-dressing. I entirely deny the first allegation ("not checking"); I am abominably thorough. On the second point, I can say that at no time had the Government, either publicly or privately, either officially or through its own numerous publications and agency, either directly or indirectly, denied *anything* I had written for any publication during the over two years I was in Accra. (Only on one occasion — eighteen months ago, regarding a women's-page feature for an obscure New York weekly—did the Minister ever reveal to me that he had read anything I had written.)

Regarding the cabinet story (*Sunday Times*, April 26th), the then Acting Prime Minister, Komla Gbedemah, sent for me on a casual basis some ten days after the story's appearance, and regretted that I had gone into the language-group (or "tribal") origins of the ministers who were to be dropped from the cabinet, since he felt this raised the delicate regional issue and had not played any part in their selection for demotion. Most of our talk was devoted to his giving me considerable additional information about the planned cabinet changes.

The report in the May 31st issue of the *Sunday Times* (about Tunis), stoutly denied by Baako, Abdoulay Diallo, and John Tettegah, was confirmed on June 2nd (the day of the cabinet's expulsion decision) by Reuters and UPI despatches from Tunis itself, and by an authorised statement from the spokesman of the Tunisian Government party, the Neo-Destour, which was the host to the Tunis gathering. The story was probably embarrassing, but it was accurate, and sooner or later the Tunis correspondents would have got on to it. I was fortunate (or was I?) in having access, in Accra, to the Administrative Secretary of the Conference.

Having been looked upon as sufficiently undangerous to be asked to perform various services for the Government in recent months, varying from writing editorials on inter-African affairs for one of the Government party's publications to conducting political research into Guinea on behalf of the Special Branch, I was not expecting to be declared dangerous. Still, these things are, as a Ghanaian official cheerfully assured me, "all in the game," though whether it was the game of West African politics or free journalism, he did not say. And as the market ladies in Accra (who interpreted the city's record catastrophic storm of June 2nd–3rd as divine intervention on my behalf, may well have concluded: *"Moko dee dzen"*—No one knows the world).

I have not changed the views expressed in my ENCOUNTER article *In Defence of Ghana*. The action, I think, reflects impetuousness, maladroitness, and hypersensitivity rather than the totalitarianism which most people outside Ghana naturally assume. The attention of people not normally very cognisant with African affairs, and of several score of editors attending the Commonwealth Press Union Conference in London, has been drawn to the Tunis rumpus, as a result of my expulsion—this alone underlines the maladroitness: totalitarians, I submit, would think two steps ahead. As a minister with a gift for mixed metaphors is alleged to have said at the cabinet meeting discussing my proposed expulsion: "It's like shutting the stable door after the cat is out of the bag."

RUSSELL WARREN HOWE

Lagos, Nigeria

"Two Cultures," One Missing

FEW PEOPLE will want to quarrel with the conclusion reached in the first part of Sir Charles Snow's Rede Lecture [ENCOUNTER, June] that our education should be less specialised; but his argument that two cultures now exist, one "the traditional culture" and the other a new "scientific culture" is an ingenious juggling of words and attitudes that should not be allowed to pass unchallenged.

"Just for these illustrations we can take (Mr. Eliot) as an archetypal figure of the 'traditional culture' "—and at once we see the scales being tipped, for why should the conservative and pessimistic Mr. Eliot be regarded as more nearly "archetypal" than the optimistic and radical Sean O'Casey or Bertolt Brecht? But of course it is essential for Sir Charles' case that "traditional culture" should be shown as socially reactionary; and by quoting a casual remark of Mr. Eliot's about preparing the ground for a new Kyd or Greene he is able to imply also that the adherents of "traditional culture" are mere library scholars, where a con-

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sideration of Mr. Eliot's full contribution to the modern theatre could not possibly support such a moral. And this view of "traditional culture" is rounded off by agreement with the view that the influence of Yeats, Pound, and Wyndham Lewis "brought Auschwitz that much nearer"—which is just about as accurate as putting upon W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and John Strachey responsibility for the Moscow Trials.

Against these library dramatists and pro-Fascists are posed the figures of the scientists, conservative, radical, Christian, or materialist, simple chaps in some ways but sharing "common attitudes, common standards and patterns of behaviour, common approaches and assumptions.... Without thinking about it they respond alike; that is what a 'culture' means."

Now, the falsity of this opposition does not rest simply in the fact that the account of the "traditional culture" is grotesquely inadequate; it is false because Sir Charles does not show that scientists have any culture at all. A culture is not simply a matter of sharing standards and patterns of behaviour, approaches, and assumptions. That sort of "culture" joins the dwellers in suburban semi's all over Britain, and is evidently not the sort of thing that Sir Charles was talking about. The Shorter Oxford's definition is "the training and refinement of mind, tastes, and manners; the condition of being thus trained and refined." The existence of a culture, that is, demands an attitude to art forms, a conception of society which is aware of art. But this—it is not one's own account of the matter but Sir Charles'—this, precisely, is what very few scientists have. They are not merely incapable of creating works of art themselves, but with a few exceptions they live in a world where art does not exist. What does he tell us about these scientists? They are interested in colour-photography; they enjoy music, are fond of long-playing records; pictures are not mentioned; some of them have tried a bit of Dickens. They enjoy "verbal exchange, insistent argument"—that is, their own kind of shop. Morally (and here no nice distinctions are made between those willing to engage in research on nuclear missiles and those who have refused to do so) they are "by and large the soundest group of intellectuals we have." It is not being very eccentric to prefer, of these two portraits, old Dryasdust in his study working on the definitive text of Barnabe Barnes.

The important thing about this is that the idea of making such a comparison could only have occurred to a writer (even a writer who is also a scientist) during the last few years. It is based, not upon the existence of "two cultures" but upon the overwhelming importance of science in maintaining and expanding modern civilisation. Since scientists and technicians of various kinds are so important, since in a hidden way they rule our lives, should we not acknowledge them as our intellectual masters? That, really, is the way the argument runs. But surely post-war life has forced upon us the understanding that as scientific skills increase, scientists' interests narrow, that most scientists see no further than a world of economic sufficiency (and few look as far)?

It is possible to maintain that scientists are right in neglecting or disapproving of "culture" as it is represented by the art of the past and present; that in the new world towards which their scientific skills are driving this art will have no place; that it will be replaced by the work in fresh art-mediums that spring out of the new society. So far as most scientists and technicians think consciously about art and culture at all, this might well be their attitude. It is a logical attitude in its way: but to say that these scientists have developed a *culture* of their own—as distinct from a set of shared opinions, habits, and responses—is to wrench the word from its meaning.

JULIAN SYMONS

Shooters Hill Road,
Blackheath

"Long Live Personality"

I JUDGE from your comments on my letter about Khrushchev's personality [ENCOUNTER, July] that we are not really very far apart. I have of course never been so foolish as to deny that Khrushchev's personal power has much increased. And I judge from your comment that you do not disagree with my point that the cult of Khrushchev's personality is not yet the same as that which used to be paid to Stalin's. The main difference is that most of what is now being said about Khrushchev in the Soviet Press is, broadly speaking, true (though not of course the whole truth), whereas what used to be said about Stalin was not.

I fear I have neither the time nor the inclination to respond to your kind invitation to prepare documentation on what has been said about Mr. Macmillan at past Conservative Party Conferences. Let us wait for the next one, and see.

W. G. HAYTER

The Warden, New College,
Oxford

Anglo-Saxon Attitudes

I SEE that in the July ENCOUNTER Mr. Constantine FitzGibbon has found yet another page on which to accuse me of anti-Americanism on the strength of my play *The Offshore Island*. Since I am not anti-American and resent the charge, will you allow me to try to meet it?

Since Mr. FitzGibbon saw my play he must know that all the actions he complains of when attributed to the Americans are attributed to the Russians too; he must know that in a play it is more sensible to give the main speaking-parts to those who speak English rather than to those unlikely to do so. He must also know that I attributed these actions not to the ill-will of either side but to the logic of the situation; this was, after all, the point of the play. The American captain is made to say, "We've got no choice, you see, there's nothing else to do. Once

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the thing started, all this had to happen.... Now we've got to survive. You'd do the same in our position, any nation would."

As to what had to happen: this I based on what *had* happened in similar situations. In war, nations feel themselves justified in attacking the countries of allies if they believe they can thereby harm the enemy; in the last war we attacked Holland, Norway, France, etc. To render unviable your own or your allies' countries is the scorched earth policy that, in the last war, we admired the Russians for applying so ruthlessly and blamed the French for failing to apply. All nations at all times incarcerate people believed to be a danger to the community; in wartime the limits of possible danger are more loosely defined. In the last war the Americans interned citizens of Japanese descent as we interned refugees, only gradually releasing those we were satisfied would not be dangerous to us. Or, to take another parallel, we consider ourselves justified at all times in isolating those who have certain infectious diseases; here, perhaps, the parallel with contaminated people likely to breed monsters is closer. My suggestion that such people would have to be sterilised was, when I wrote the play six years ago, my own; but I recently heard this put forward on a public platform by a reputable scientist.

I readily admit that it is more horrible to attack your allies with nuclear weapons than with high explosives; to scorch earth by means of radioactivity than by burning and slaughtering; to sterilise people than merely to shut them up. But this was the point of my play: that actions usual and inevitable in war become unspeakably horrible in nuclear war; and that, once war broke out, any nation, whether "good" or "bad," would be forced to such actions by the logic of the situation. My play was not against Americans but against nuclear war.

Mr. FitzGibbon also objects to the shooting of an English boy by an American. To this incident, which arises out of personal relationships, nationality is hardly relevant. Or does Mr. FitzGibbon believe that English writers should now be so committed as never to show an American doing anything nasty?

MARGHANITA LASKI

Capo di Monte,
Windmill Hill, London

[CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON writes: *The answer to the final question is no.*

Miss Laski's argument-by-analogy is hardly likely to convince any sane person that any American government would, in the foreseeable future, deliberately destroy a Great Britain with which America enjoys a very close alliance. It is, of course, conceivable; it is equally conceivable that pigs might fly, but they would be a most remarkable bird.

Miss Laski's fantastical horror-comic is her own concern. My comment was directed in the main against a quasi-governmental organisation displaying these unpleasant fancies to a mass audience in terms of maximum realism. You, sir, and your readers will have had little difficulty in evaluating Miss Laski's emotional outpourings at their worth. The millions who watch TV include many who lack the mental ability to do so. They will have seen an American atrocity perpetrated upon Britain, and nothing more.

The plea that in her play the Russians are shown as being just as bad is both disingenuous and mischievous. Let me resort to Miss Laski's favourite method of analogy. If, in 1939, a Frenchman had written a play in which he equated the political morality of the British with that of Nazi Germany, we would have had little difficulty in recognising him for what he was. To equate a Russia that has concentration camps, practises genocide, and enslaves its neighbours with a fictitious America envisaged as behaving in identical fashion in the immediate future is a strange way for someone who is "not anti-American and resents the charge" to behave. Furthermore, her quite gratuitous insertion of inaccurate, irrelevant, and outmoded references to racial discrimination within the United States Army was pure anti-American propaganda, and set the tone of the play from the beginning.

Finally, to attempt verisimilitude by using the names of real people when writing fantasy leads on occasion to the law courts and suitable damages. Miss Laski gives one reason for ascribing this imaginary outrage of hers to the Americans: "It is more sensible to give the main speaking-parts to those who speak English." If so, why did she not make her murderers and sterilisers Englishmen? Is it that such a framework would immediately have revealed her play to an English audience as the curdled and nasty nonsense it is?]

Art Book

THE ill-mannered note on my book *Joseph Crawhall* in your magazine [ENCOUNTER, "New Art Books," April] has just reached me.

Your reviewer is entitled to his opinions and I am entitled to mine, but his apparent omniscience would have been more convincing had he suggested an alternative selection of Crawhall's works since, as he writes, the artist "could have been better served" in this respect. I could but choose from the great Burrell Collection and private collections that I have seen. Unless your contributor can indicate a better group of pictures his attack on the book is misleading.

Also, it would be interesting to know what he means by an "illustrator of the wrong sort" by quoting names of illustrators of the right sort.

ADRIAN BURY

London, S.W.3

[OUR REVIEWER writes: *Crawhall was an amateur artist and as with all amateurs the difference in quality between his best and his worst work is extreme. It seemed to me that Mr. Bury was being unfair by giving so much space to works like "The Aviary," "Putting him through his paces," "The Earth Stopper," and others which betray all Crawhall's affectations. There are plenty of less pretentious drawings of birds and animals to choose from in the Burrell Collection which illustrate the authentic and imaginative side of Crawhall's output.*

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As for his being an illustrator of the wrong sort, let Mr. Bury compare the illustration "Reynard the Fox" on every or any level with a drawing by Beatrix Potter, Beardsley, William Nicholson, Hartwicke, Keene, to give the first few names that come to mind, and perhaps he will see what I mean.]

"Impasse in the Holy Land"

DR. LEO KOHN'S letter [ENCOUNTER, May 1959] is, of course, so all-embracing that a detailed response is impossible. It would involve a debate whose essential issues are known, and on which he and I could not more agree in your columns than we could in Jerusalem last November.

My concern in my article (July 1958) was to suggest that the Arab-Israel *impasse* involves questions of limits of human tolerance—questions that would arise *anywhere* if the post-1919 history of Palestine, and Zionist Israel's posture and peace-terms, were reproduced. The suggestions I made in that article were those that would most concretely alter Israel's posture to the Arabs. As an Ambassador-level adviser to the Israeli Foreign Office, Dr. Kohn has made quite clear that these suggestions are unacceptable. The basic problem remains and, I believe, can be seen even in his letter. One facet of it is a constant tendency to address argument, not to Arabs, but to the outside world; not to solving the *impasse* but to reinforcing it.

Thus, in his closing words Dr. Kohn affirms that Israel has always been ready to negotiate "assuredly without any preliminary conditions or commitments." This is not true. Israel is ready to negotiate *provided* (a) the Arabs accept her present *de facto* territory; (b) the Arabs renounce a choice of repatriation or compensation for the refugees; (c) the Arabs accept unrestrained Ingathering. In short, Israel is ready to negotiate on anything but the fundamentals of the *impasse*.

In the same way, Dr. Kohn asserts that the east-west land axis in the Arab world does not cross the Negev, and that Israel's possession of the Negev has averted Egyptian-Iraqi war. This is not only contradictory; it is an argument having only explosive value so far as Arabs are concerned. So, too, is his reiteration that Arab fears of Israeli expansionism are belied by the record. The unhappy fact is that, against a background which the Arabs can only view as expansionism in itself (1917 to 1949), Israel officially reserves historical claim to eastern Eretz Israel, and suddenly claimed Sinai on the same grounds even while invading it. This is not interpretation, but simple reading of published *Yearbooks*, maps, official bulletins, Knesset speeches, and military orders of the day in Sinai.

The least that can surely be said is that if these public messianic claims are mere national sentiment, then it would help if Israel's leaders refrained from making them. It would help *Israelis*, whose security of haven must remain jeopardised so long as Arabs deem it unsafe to make peace with such a state. I know of no group of Western countries that would make peace with a state imposed in their midst, whose leaders publicly assert the same historical claim, to an additional 32,000 to 62,000 square miles, that was asserted to gain the state itself.

The same problem arises over population. Dr. Kohn sincerely believes in an intrinsic, permanent "Jewish problem" for all Jewish minorities in the Diaspora (though several million Western Jews disagree). The least of the trouble is that, although he and all Zionists know that the corollary, the total Ingathering, will never be realised *because* so many Jews disagree, the state continues to offer this spectre to its neighbours. More: while welcoming as a miracle the possibility of Moscow releasing some 3,000,000 Jews for emigration, Zionism gives no sign of trying to arrange a *choice* of new haven for them. It may *be* that they would all opt for Israel, even with a choice of America, Canada, Australia, etc. But one would have thought that Zionism, in the interests of such prospective emigrés, and of present Israelis, would bend every effort to make the choice available, at the least.

Space quite prevents comment on the purportive evidence Dr. Kohn offers to support the standing Israeli claim that the foremost cause of the Palestine Arab Exodus was an official Arab evacuation policy. Here again, this is an instance of addressing an argument to the rest of the world which can only inflame the *impasse* because *Arabs* know the facts. Dr. Kohn knows that thousands upon thousands of Palestinians were forcibly expelled by Jewish troops; that the very same *Economist* article from which he extrapolates cites such expulsion; that other reports by that journal give more details; that Msgr. Hakim never alleged Arab orders to evacuate and has been misquoted for years; that the State of Israel made no such allegation at the time of the exodus; and that in all the years since its spokesmen began to make this charge, they have failed to produce a single piece of primary, documented evidence to support it.

Finally, although Dr. Kohn knows well from my article that I do not suggest that large-scale repatriation is feasible, he produces more secondary sources to suggest that the refugees are unwilling political pawns. Official UNRWA reports are cited. The latest such report, for 1958 (UNGA 13:14A/3931), states categorically that there have been "no signs of any change from their collective hostility towards major development projects which, to the refugees, imply permanent resettlement away from their ancestral homes, and the abandonment of their hopes of repatriation."

The Report *then* goes on to note "encouraging signs" of readiness for self-support and training projects *within* this basic hostility. This may indeed be the small beginning. But Dr. Kohn is helping neither Israel nor Arabs by misquoting, even via a Swiss journal. Yet again, this is argument addressed, not to the parties to the *impasse*, but to the world beyond.

None of this is to minimise Arab threats; on the contrary. But none of these aspects of Zionist Israel's posture derives from such threats. Claims to Eretz Israel do not; the population "destination" Mr. Ben-Gurion predicts does not; failure to give future

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refugees a choice of haven does not; distortion about the Exodus does not. These "faces" of Israel do, however, feed Arab fears and hostilities, and will go on doing so, quite inexorably. How this helps the hapless Israeli I simply cannot see.

ERSKINE B. CHILDERS

Dublin

Revolt

As you know, any implication of drug addiction is actionable. The purported quotation from me on page 45 of your June 1959 issue is such an implication, taken in the context of Caroline Freud's article. The quotation, besides, is completely false, as, for that matter, is any connection between myself and the people described. I happened to have been the first critic to write of them at any length and that is all. I might say that Mrs. Freud's article is absurd and false throughout and shares with the Luce publications and other representations of the gutter press in the U.S.A. and abroad the attempt to exorcise by cheap slander and worse comedy the revolt of a large section of the world's youth against —how shall I put it?—precisely the Establishment represented so perfectly by ENCOUNTER and its editors.

KENNETH REXROTH

Lawn House
Church Lane, Mevagissey
Cornwall

"Mammy"

LEONARD WOOLF, in his article in the July ENCOUNTER, has made a mistake in the use of the word "mammy" that should be, for his own good, corrected. As far as I know, the word is not generally used in the English language or if it is, it has little more character than "mummy" or "mamma" or "ma." However, the word has a rather widely recognised significance in the language as it is used in the States; "mammy," unless otherwise and specifically defined within the sentence, means "old Southern mammy" and an old Southern mammy is always black or mulatto. Always. The most civilised people the Anglo-Saxon world has ever known had black mammies. Which is neither here nor there, as I agree *en principe* with most of Mr. Woolf's article. The point is that mammies only come in one basic colour. This sort of thing does not help Anglo-American relations.

EDWINA RUBENSTEIN

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SUMMER 1959

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Love and Death in Johntown, Tenn.
(*An excerpt from his forthcoming novel, 'The Cave'*)

NORMAN PODHORETZ
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JAMES PURDY
Everything Under the Sun (*story*)

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Nadine Gordimer lives in South Africa, and her most recent book is *A World of Strangers* (Gollancz, 1958).

Andrew Shonfield is the Economic Editor of *The Observer*. His study of *British Economic Policy Since the War* has been published as a Penguin.

Erich Heller is Professor of German Literature at University College, Swansea. A book of his essays (Spengler, Burckhardt, Kafka, Karl Kraus) was published under the title of *The Disinherited Mind*, and his study of Thomas Mann appeared this year. (See Goronwy Rees' review of *The Ironic German* in the January 1959 ENCOUNTER, and the ensuing controversy.) He is the general editor of the Bowes & Bowes series of monographs on "The European Mind."

Herbert Passin lived in Japan for ten years and has published a number of scholarly studies on Japanese post-war society. He has written frequently for ENCOUNTER from the Far East. In the past two years he has been travelling in Africa.

Robert Brustein is a New York drama critic and is the author of our note on Tennessee Williams ("Sweet Bird of Success") in the June ENCOUNTER.

Daniel Bell is one of America's foremost "journalist-intellectuals." His *Notes on Work*, now in book form, was first published in ENCOUNTER, June, 1954; his article on U.S. trade unions appeared in our issue of February 1958. He was for many years the Labour Editor of *Fortune* Magazine. He has just been appointed Professor of Sociology at Columbia University.

Karl Miller is literary editor of *The Spectator* in London.

Geoffrey Grigson contributed the much-discussed note on "Leavis vs. Eliot" in our April 1959 number.

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A Preview of our Autumn Programme

Highlights among the books we shall be publishing before Christmas include, from British authors, a first novel on which we pin the highest hopes, EATING PEOPLE IS WRONG by Malcolm Bradbury; Frank Norman's revelations of what it is really like to live in Soho, STAND ON ME; a collection of Vicky's cartoons of the last five years entitled VICKY'S WORLD; and Kingsley Martin's CRITIC'S LONDON DIARY, the quintessence of this famous column from 1931–1956.

Foreign authors include Moravia, with a new collection of short stories, THE WAYWARD WIFE; Pierre Boulle, with a full length novel SACRILEGE IN MALAYA; and Bernard Poirot-Delpech, whose first novel FOOL'S PARADISE (LE GRAND DADAIS) won the Prix Interallie and has sold 100,000 copies in France.

America is represented by Tennessee Williams's latest play SWEET BIRD OF YOUTH and Warren Miller's THE COOL WORLD, a devastatingly authentic novel of Harlem's teenage gangs.

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Robert Kee
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